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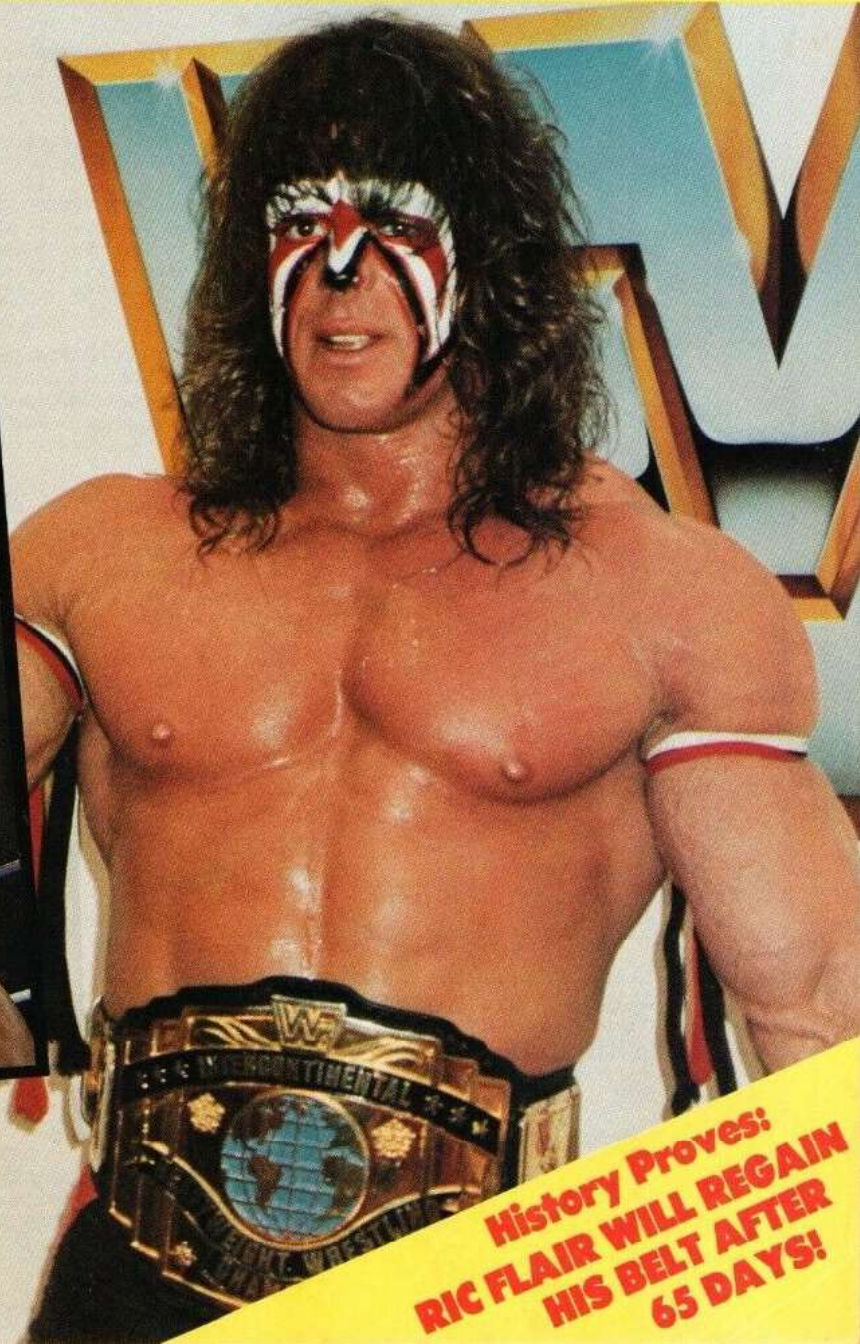
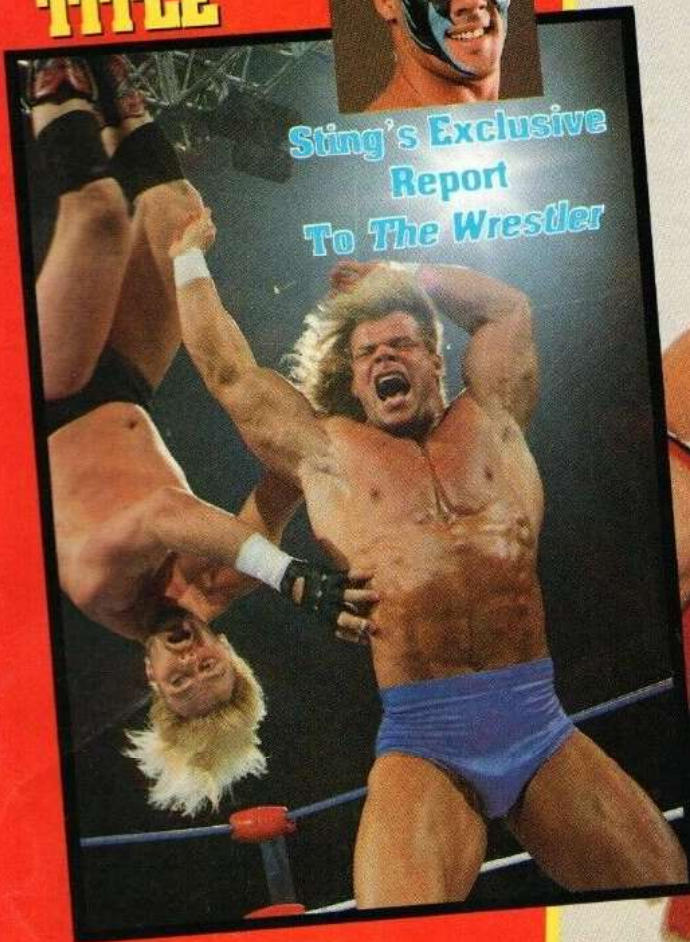
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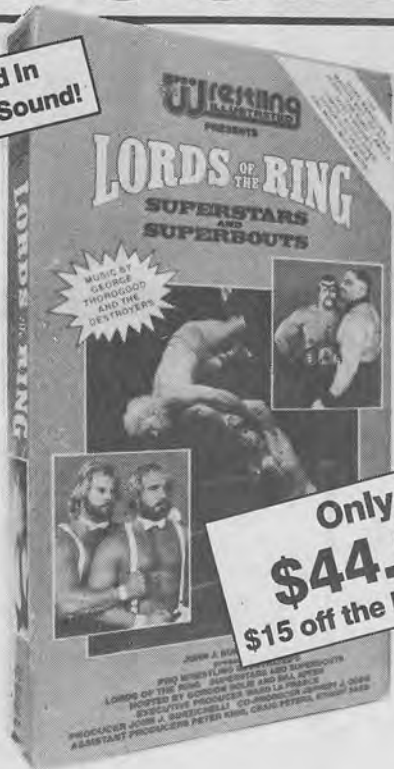
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THE Wrestler

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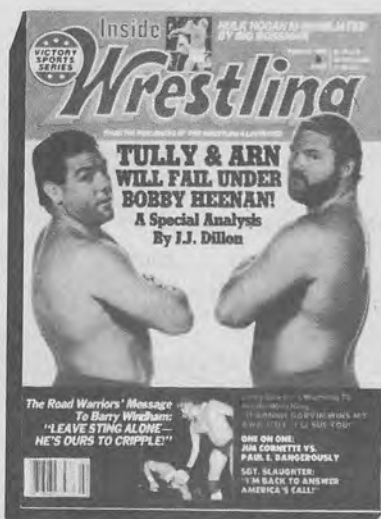
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YOUR LETTERS

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IT'S SAVAGE'S FAULT ...

With regards to the article in your April 1989 issue ("Hulkamania Runs Wild Again! Can Randy Savage Stop The Onslaught?"), I think it is about time that a showdown between Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage came to pass. The notion that there's something going on between Hogan and Elizabeth is just a figment of Savage's warped imagination.

Hogan saw Elizabeth as his man-

ager and the leader of the Megapowers, nothing more, nothing less. If Savage has a problem with that, it just shows how unbalanced he really is.

Savage and Hogan will meet in an all-out war, and Savage is going to regret that he ever doubted Hogan's sincerity. Savage will realize that the "Hulkster" still rules!

RON KIDA
Palisades Park, NJ

I would like to publicly thank Randy Savage for what he did to Hulk Hogan during the nationally televised *Main Event* on February 3. Yes, I'd like to thank "Macho Man" for hitting Hogan!

Savage accused Hogan of jealousy. He accused him of having lust for Elizabeth. He hit Hulk with the WWF championship belt. Finally, after months of phony Megapower handshakes, Savage finally woke Hogan up.

Now, Hulk has challenged Savage for the title. Soon, we'll all be able to see Hogan wear the WWF World belt once again.

Thank you, Randy Savage!
ELYSE ZOIS
Union, NJ

... OR IS IT HOGAN'S?

After what happened on NBC's *Main Event* between Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage, I'm going to refer to Savage as the "Vintage Macho Man." It's just like the old days when Savage first entered the WWF back in 1985. This, my friends, is the *real* Savage!

I believe he was simply fooled by the public into becoming a fan favorite, while all the time he was holding his natural anger inside. He sure let



Randy Savage and Hulk Hogan were at odds at the Royal Rumble. A surprising number of fans are voicing their support of the "Macho Man," despite his brutal attack on the "Hulkster" in the dressing room at Milwaukee's Bradley Center.

his true feelings be known in Milwaukee, didn't he? Just ask Hogan!

Savage made the best move of his career by making the transition to his normal rulebreaking style. Now, I'd like to make a brief suggestion. Savage should dump Elizabeth and hire a manager like Bobby Heenan or, better yet, James J. Dillon.

Good luck, Randy. It's great to have you back!

PHILLIP BRUNO
New York

HIGHWAY ROBBERY

The story in your April 1989 issue ("SuperClash SuperControversy: Were They Right To Stop The Von Erich-Lawler Bout?") featured several wrestlers and officials giving their



Although Kerry Von Erich was bleeding heavily in his title match against Jerry Lawler at SuperClash, the bout shouldn't have been stopped, writes Kevin Walker.

opinions on one of the bloodiest matches in history. As far as I'm concerned, they shouldn't have stopped that bout. Two of wrestling's most important titles were at stake.

I know Von Erich was bleeding very badly—I've never seen anyone lose so much blood—but this wasn't just *any* match. If I were AWA President Stanley Blackburn, I'd have forced Lawler to give Kerry more title shots.

I always thought you had to pin your opponent, have him submit, or have him counted out to win a wrestling match, but I guess I was wrong. I'm not saying that referee Marty Miller isn't an honest man, but how could he award Lawler those belts that way? There wasn't a pinfall or submission. This kind of thing hurts the sport very badly.

KEVIN WALKER
New York

ZBYSZKO'S TRIUMPH

Your magazine sure looked stupid by putting Larry Zbyszko on the "Thumbs Down" list (April 1989). He proved all of you wrong by winning the AWA World title in a battle royal.

Zbyszko showed wrestling skill, not flagrant cheating. And after it was all over, he even challenged Randy Savage and Ric Flair to championship matches! If you guys decide to put Zbyszko on the wrong side of that list again, it will only prove your bias against this great athlete.

This man is primed to fight great battles throughout his title reign. I hope he continues to prove *all* the critics wrong.

ROY LUCIER
Garden Grove, CA

BIG BUSINESS

The decision of Ric Flair to sell his contract to a Japanese business concern is further evidence of a growing trend. Major investors, recognizing the profit potential wrestling has to offer, are becoming active participants in the financial aspects of wrestling.

Needless to say, this development will prove extremely beneficial for the grapplers involved. Solid financial backing, state-of-the-art training facilities, and prudent management practices are assured for Flair and company.

The appointment of Hiro Matsuda to oversee the day-to-day operations of this new venture was an excellent choice. He brings to the job an extensive background as both a wrestler and a trainer. His previous association with J.J. Dillon undoubtedly helped speed up negotiations, as Dillon briefly hired Matsuda a couple of years ago as an adviser to Lex Luger during his feud with Dusty Rhodes.

It's too early to fully assess the impact of this conglomerate's presence in the NWA. Perhaps the Horsemen will begin touring Japan on a regular basis. We could experi-

(Continued on page 44)



The AWA World title battle royal was a flurry of action won by Larry Zbyszko. Reader Roy Lucier chides *The Wrestler* for giving Zbyszko a "thumbs down."

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

By BILL APTER

THE BIGGEST LOSER at the NWA's Chi-Town Rumble card was **Hiro Matsuda**, new manager of **Ric Flair** and **Barry Windham**. When Matsuda, an agent for the Yamasaki Corporation, signed Flair and Windham in early February, both were champions. But Flair lost his NWA World championship to **Rick Steamboat**, and Windham lost the U.S. title to **Lex Luger**—both on Matsuda's first major card as manager.

"It's hard to say whether Matsuda can be blamed for what happened," said Steamboat, "but one thing's for certain: **J.J. Dillon** would've played a little more active part in their matches. Dillon was always there to interfere, but Matsuda basically stayed out of the way. It's one of the reasons why my match against Flair was so good. Don't think the fact that Matsuda was there instead of Dillon had nothing to do with it."

But Matsuda, who is trying to recruit other NWA stars and now has an 0-2 record on his resume, said he intends to be more active in the future. "I was reviewing the situation," Matsuda said. "It is unfortunate that my men lost the ti-



Hiro Matsuda was a big loser at the Chi-Town Rumble. Both his men, Ric Flair and Barry Windham, lost their titles.

ties, but the incompetent referee was not there when Ric pinned Steamboat and Luger got lucky against Barry."

Dillon, who predicted failure for Flair and Windham under Matsuda and is now working in a front-office position with the WWF, could not be reached for comment. One can expect, however, that he was gloating over the results of the Chi-Town Rumble. If that is in fact

the case, it wouldn't bother Flair.

"J.J. is history," the five-time former champion said. "I fired him because he's incompetent, and I signed with Hiro because he's the best going. Besides, you people fail to point out that Hiro trained Luger, and he'd be nothing if not for Hiro. Give it time. Two flukes don't make a manager's record."

The other big news of the Chi-Town Rumble was **Mike Rotundo's** victory over **Rick Steiner** to regain the NWA TV title. Steiner had won the belt from his former **Varsity Club** partner at Starrcade '88 on December 26. This time, Rotundo was the beneficiary of a little luck. Steiner had Rotundo caught in a sleeperhold, but was lying down with his shoulders on the mat. The referee made the three-count, meaning Steiner had pinned himself!

"Only an idiot could do what he did," Varsity Club manager **Kevin Sullivan** said, "and Steiner's enough of an idiot to do *anything*. I told Mike to just lay back, don't worry about anything, and Steiner would beat himself. Perfect strategy!"

(Continued on page 48)

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MOVE OVER, Tommy Young. Watch out, Dick Kroll. Don't look over your shoulder, Dick Woherle. There's a new kid on the block, and he's ready to join your elite referees' group.

Meet Teddy Long.

Actually, Long isn't exactly a "new" kid. He's been a referee for the past 4½ years, three of those on TBS' *World Championship Wrestling*. But now, wrestlers, fans, and officials are beginning to recognize Long as one of the sport's top refs. More and more, he's getting choice assignments at the NWA's major cards like Starrcade, the Crockett Cup, and the Great American Bash.

"I'm just doing the job I love," Long said in an interview conducted a few days after the Chi-Town Rumble. "If more people see me now, that's great, but all I'm concerned with is doing the best job I know how."

Like a lot of refs, Long originally trained to be a wrestler. "But that didn't work out. In the meantime, I received my referee certification while doing odd jobs, like running errands for the wrestlers and putting up the ring. Then, one night, one of the refs didn't show up and they asked me to take his place. I was excited ... until they told me it was a Texas death match!"

Although Long almost got hurt, he was glad to get the opportunity. "That was a little over four years ago, and I'm still here," he said. "It hasn't gotten any easier, but I enjoy the challenge night after night. Just to stay out of the way of guys like Abdullah the

Butcher is a big problem."

Aside from some early work with the late Ann Gunkel's independent promotion in Georgia, Long has officiated solely in the NWA. "I'm glad to be in such a great organization," Long said.



Referee Teddy Long awards Rick Steamboat the NWA World title belt at the Chi-Town Rumble. Long has become one of the top referees in the sport.

WIN LOSE OR DRAW

BY ANDY RODRIGUEZ

"I've learned a lot working alongside guys like Tommy Young. He's the best referee around today, as far as I'm concerned. He's always willing to give me pointers. He'll watch me work a match and tell me what I should or shouldn't be doing."

"I'm really proud of Teddy," Young said. "Right now I consider him one of the best refs in the business. He's a hard worker and he gets better every day. In another few years, he'll be tremendous. He's not afraid to make the tough decisions."

Long was in the thick of a tough decision at

the Chi-Town Rumble in February. When Young was knocked out during the Ric Flair-Rick Steamboat World title match, it was Long who came to the ring to try to get his partner back on his feet. And when Steamboat had Flair pinned, Long shot into the ring and made the three-count.

"Hiro Matsuda said the decision should have been overturned because I wasn't the original ref," Long said, "but they're wrong. There's a rule that provides for two referees to be present at a title match. When Tommy was knocked out, I was legally allowed to make that count."

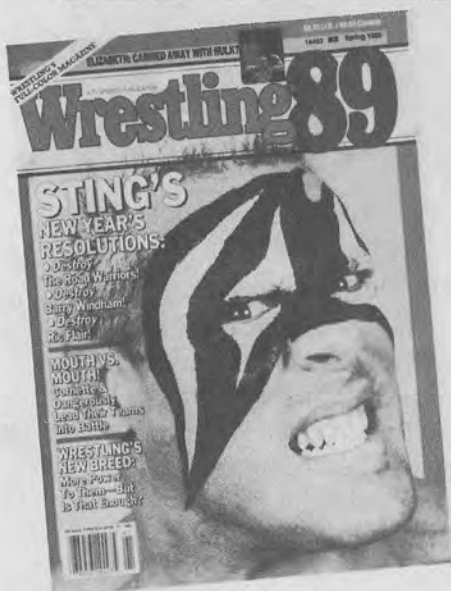
The fans in attendance, however, had trouble accepting Long's authority. When he awarded Steamboat the belt, they held back their cheers. Only when Young raised "The Dragon's" hand did they let loose.

"That's okay," Long said. "Tommy's been around for a long time and he has the fans' respect. They knew that if he said the belt

(Continued on page 52)

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BY BOB SMITH

THE SUNDAY NIGHT

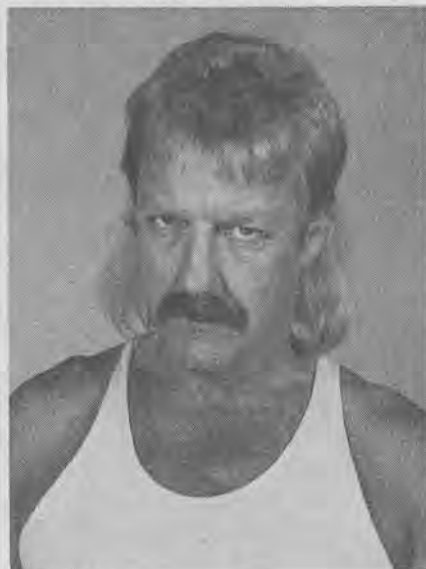
IT WAS A NIGHT no one will soon forget. Chi-Town Rumble '89 will go down in history as the night when three new champions were crowned in the NWA.

As glorious as this event was for the new titleholders—NWA World champion Rick Steamboat, TV champion Mike Rotundo, and U.S. titleholder Lex Luger—this night was a major disaster for one man in particular. At least Ric Flair, Rick Steiner, and Barry Windham, the men who lost those titles, will return to fight another day. For Randy Rose, his loss meant much more.

Rose lost his job.

It was advertised as the final battle between Jim Cornette and his Midnight Express (Stan Lane and Bobby Eaton) and Paul E. Dangerously and his "Original" Midnight Express (Rose and Dennis Condrey). The man who was pinned in this six-man bout would be forced to leave the NWA, effectively ending the career of one of these two teams. As it turned out, Condrey failed to show up for this confrontation between two teams that have been feuding violently for months.

Condrey was replaced by Jack Victory, last seen in the World Class area four months earlier, for the biggest match in the careers of *either* Express. In the end, all six men battled in the ring, but Lane managed to pin



Randy Rose

Rose, and both were the legal men. Now there is truly only *one* Midnight Express.

I was lucky enough to be present at this outstanding card. It was a wild night, full of champagne celebrations for the new champions. However, during the party for Rotundo, Rose just slumped against his locker, staring into space. Feeling brave, I approached Rose and asked if he would care to comment on his plight.

"What difference does it make now?" said Rose bitterly, throwing a towel into a locker. "My NWA career is finished, isn't it? I never dreamed in a million years that I could go from the top of the heap to the bottom of the barrel—all in one night. I feel used and betrayed."

I asked Rose why Condrey failed to show up for this important match. "Damned if I know!" he exclaimed. "Damned if I know anything anymore. I was prepared for us to go in and beat Cornette and his men. Hell, we've done it before, and we could do it again. But tonight, there was too much confusion since Dennis went AWOL. Still, up until the pinfall, I thought I had wrestled the best match of my career."

Indeed, Rose carried his team throughout the match. Whenever Dangerously got into trouble—which was often—Rose was there to get him out of it. It was Rose who dominated the offensive effort, coming close to several pinfalls.

"Now Dangerously is abandoning me," moaned Rose. "After all I did for him, the little twerp decides to turn his back on me when I need his help. And that's coming after Condrey left me out to dry. I don't know what I'm going to do now. Yesterday, everything seemed great. I never should have trusted Paul in the first place."

Fighting back his emotions, Rose got up and walked out of the locker room. I felt very badly for this man who had done everything Dangerously asked of him, only to be cast aside for his efforts.

A few days later, I caught up with Dangerously in another arena. I asked him about Randy.

"Randy *who*?" asked Dangerously. "That's old news. I want you to meet Samu and Fatu, The Samoan Swat Team, a *real* championship combination."

I felt sorry for Rose. But I pity Dangerously. As for the SST, let this be a warning: Dangerously could be your one-way ticket to oblivion.

Just like he was for Randy Rose. □

THE VIDEOTAPE EVENT OF THE YEAR!



Slant-Eyed Slaughter

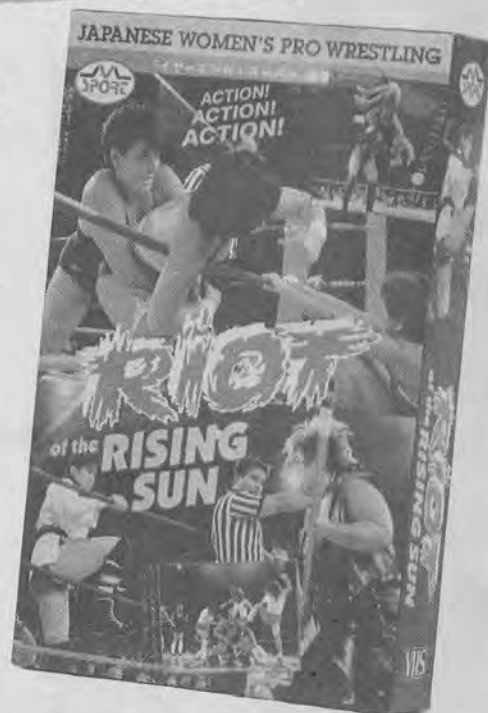
(running time: approximately 70 minutes)

- Wendi Richter & "Devil" Masami vs. Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori & Okumura
- Nancy Kumi vs. Lucy Kayama
- Monster Ripper & "Devil" Masami vs. Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori & Mimi Hagiwara
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. Tarantula
- "Crush Girl" Lioness Asuka vs. "Crush Girl" Chigusa Nagayo

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Riot Of The Rising Sun

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- Yukari Omori & Ayumi "Jumbo" Hori vs. Noriyo Tateno & Itysuki Yamasaki—"The Jumping Bomb Angels"
- Masked You & Kaoru "Dump" Matsumoto vs. Lioness Asuka & Chigusa Nagayo—"The Crush Girls"
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. Las Galactia
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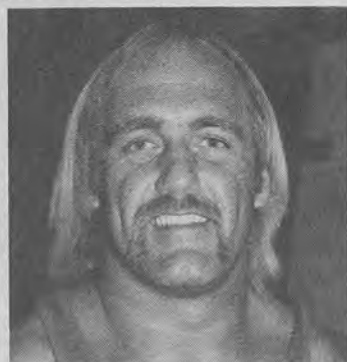
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Thumbs Up

Each issue, *The Wrestler* will praise the noteworthy and damn those who violate the honor of wrestling. The praiseworthy receive a Thumbs Up, the disgraceful are marked with a Thumbs Down. Here is this month's roll of honor and shame.



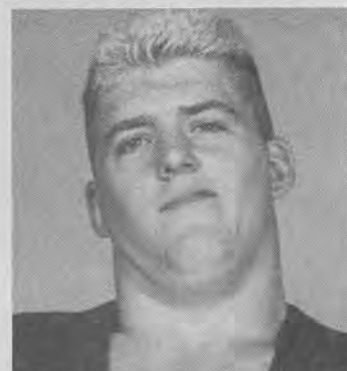
Thumbs Up to Roddy Piper. The news that "Piper's Pit" is back was greeted with joy by *The Wrestler* staff. What could be better for the sport than this popular, talented, and entertaining individual returning after a two-year absence? And it's been a long two years. Many individuals have tried to copy the "Rowdy Scot," but none have been able to duplicate him. "Piper's Pit" was scheduled to debut live on March 19 at 9 p.m. on FNN/Score cable network, with Lee Marshall as co-host. It's sure to be a big hit.



Thumbs Up to Hulk Hogan. Whatever the outcome of WrestleMania V, the "Hulkster" can rest assured that he did the right thing on February 3 in Milwaukee. Elizabeth was injured and in need of medical attention. The match had become secondary. Maybe Hogan *does* lust after Elizabeth. Maybe he *does* want the World title. But he was worried for Elizabeth's safety and can't be blamed. Savage, on the other hand, overestimated the importance of a wrestling match. He, not Hogan, should have helped Elizabeth. Instead, he acted like the selfish, arrogant man he truly is.

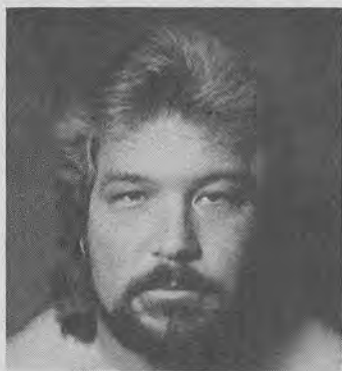


Thumbs Up to Rick Steiner. He lost the NWA TV title, but the big story is that Steiner has reunited with Eddie Gilbert, bringing back the tag team that strongly contended for the UWF belts back in 1986. This time, however, both men have improved with age and experience and figure to make a big run at current U.S. tag champs Kevin Sullivan and Steve Williams. Can Steiner go after the TV title and the tag belts at the same time? We don't see why not. The "Dogfaced Gremlin" is one of the most talented athletes in the sport. This new team figures to be nearly unbeatable.



Thumbs Up to Dustin Rhodes. A strong case can be made that Dustin was better off in the national spotlight of the NWA, but he can't be faulted for going back to Florida to stand by his father, "American Dream" Dusty Rhodes. Some things are more important than titles and pride. Helping your fellow man, especially when that man is your father, is a supremely noble gesture. Dustin is sacrificing his career for a man who has meant the world to him. He knows there'll be plenty of time for personal glory. It's family first, and we salute him for having his priorities in order.

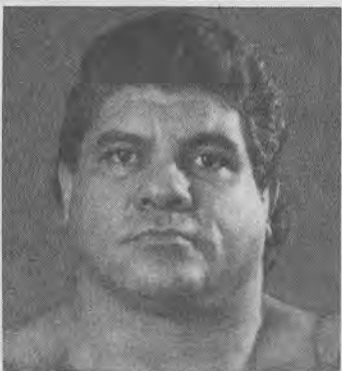
Thumbs Down



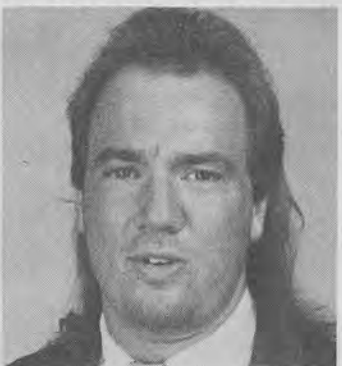
Thumbs Down to Ted DiBiase. Saying that the WWF World championship belt was “too cheap-looking” for him to wear, DiBiase—who considers himself champion—recently appeared on TV with the new million-dollar belt that was made especially for him. Well, we have some news for the “Million-Dollar Man.” You’re *not* champion, DiBiase, and it’s almost laughable that you’d consider yourself one. You had more than your share of chances against Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage, but you couldn’t get the job done. Your belt is worthless. It merely labels you as the world champion sore loser.



Thumbs Down to Robert Gibson. Last month, Rick Morton of The Rock ‘n’ Roll Express was the victim of our poison pen. Now it’s time for his Express partner to feel our wrath. We find it extremely hard to believe that Morton and Gibson’s attack on Jerry Lawler wasn’t premeditated. Gibson, who initially teamed with Lawler and said he wanted to teach Morton a lesson, taught *all* of us a lesson with his back-stabbing attack: The Rock ‘n’ Rolls are no longer to be trusted. Rock ‘n’ roll will never die? Guess again. The spirit of The Rock ‘n’ Roll Express as we once knew it is already dead.



Thumbs Down to Don Muraco. Just two months ago, we gave a big “thumbs up” to Muraco for escaping the WWF shuffle, signing with Stampede Wrestling, and winning the North American title. Things have changed since then. Muraco was recently stripped of the belt for failing to defend it within a 30-day period and now finds himself in a new place: no man’s land. He’s wrestling in several independent federations and is in danger of falling out of the national spotlight. It’s sad to see such talent wasted. “The Rock” can do better for himself—and for the sport.



Thumbs Down to Paul E. Dangerously. A few years ago in the CWA, Dangerously was left alone in the ring while the men he managed, Austin Idol and Tommy Rich, walked back to the dressing room; Dangerously suffered a brutal beating at the hands of Jerry Lawler and Bill Dundee. On February 20 at the Chi-Town Rumble, Dangerously proved that he wasn’t one to stand by his men, either. When Randy Rose lost the loser-leaves-the-NWA match, he asked Dangerously for help. Paul E.’s response: “He got pinned, I didn’t. He did his job, he’s unemployed. That’s tough.” Nice guy. □

CORRESPONDENTS

REPORTS

Buffalo, NY (Correspondent—Christopher Jaskowiak): Amidst the controversy involving Elizabeth and Hulk Hogan, WWF World champion Randy "Macho Man" Savage faced his most threatening challenger, Intercontinental kingpin The Ultimate Warrior. Both titles were on the line in this clash.

Savage attacked Warrior before the bell, nailing the I-C champ with elbowsmashes. Warrior shook off the impact of the elbows, responding with chops, a clothesline, and a flying shoulder-block. "Macho Man" went to the top rope and attempted a flying cross-bodyblock. Amazingly, the massive Warrior snatched the bewildered Savage out of the air and pressed him overhead.

After being slammed twice, Savage took the advantage by moving away from a Warrior charge and throwing the I-C titlist into the corner. He then delivered an over-the-knee backbreaker. Savage dominated the young champion decisively for about 10 minutes, racking him with elbows, a clothesline off the ropes, kneedrops, and flying axhandles.

Warrior evaded several pin attempts, displaying remarkable durability. The I-C titlist seemed dazzled by Savage's aerial attacks, as the World champion used his



WWF Intercontinental champion The Ultimate Warrior dumps World champ Randy "Macho Man" Savage on his head. They've been battling ever since Savage turned against Hulk Hogan. Often both titles are on the line.

guile and speed to methodically weaken the Warrior. Savage refused to get into a slugfest with his powerful opponent, thus helping to negate the Warrior's enormous strength.

The Warrior began to tire, and Savage seemed to have him where he wanted him. But without warning, Warrior went on a ferocious onslaught, hammering "Macho Man" with kicks, punches, hiptosses, and smashes into

the turnbuckle. A tremendous clothesline sent the World champ down, and Warrior prepared to go for the pin. But there was a surprise coming.

Rick Rude, archrival of the Warrior, came to ringside. Rude's mere presence infuriated the Warrior, who wasted no time in attacking him. As Ultimate choked Rude high in the air, Savage got to his feet and scaled the ropes.

(Continued on page 62)

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Q: "My question is for Dynamite Kid and Davey Boy Smith, The British Bulldogs: Why haven't you brought Matilda, your pet bulldog, to the ring now that you are wrestling in the Stampede area?"—Lauree Long, Edmonton, Alberta

A: "It's not really necessary anymore," responded Smith. "It was very traumatic for Matilda when she was kidnapped by The Islanders and Bobby Heenan last year. She lost a lot of weight, and it took months for Dynamite and myself to nurse her back to health. She used to be a great inspiration for us when she sat at ringside, but we simply decided not to put her in that kind of peril anymore. Now, she's safe at home living a life of doggie luxury. She deserves it after all she's been through, don't you think?"

Q: "My question is for Buddy Landell: Are you ever going to re-

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turn to the NWA? If you do, will you fight Ric Flair to prove that you are the *real* 'Nature Boy'?"—George Thurman, Shepherdsville, KY

A: "I don't have to beat up on Flair to prove I'm the *only* Nature Boy," boasted Landell. "I beat him before back in 1985. Anybody who's ever seen me wrestle knows that he couldn't stand up to my talents for very long. Sure, he's a five-time NWA World champion, but that's only because he's been ducking my challenge. I don't think I really have to wrestle him to prove my superiority, but if a promoter put up the right amount of money, I might be forced to beat him again. As far as the NWA, I have no aversion to returning there, but right now I'm happy beating up all the stiffes here in the ACW. But that's how I feel today. Tomorrow, who knows?"

Q: "My question is for Paul Ellering: Your selection of Genichiro Tenryu as the six-man championship partner of The Road Warriors was a brilliant one. Will he be coming to the United States more often now?"—Ron Anderson, Lombard, IL

A: "Yes, and with good reason, idiot," responded Ellering. "There wasn't a single American wrestler that I would have considered as being our six-man championship partner. In that light, we decided to look outside the immediate boundaries of the NWA to find the perfect, championship-caliber athlete that a team of our greatness deserves. On a recent trip to Japan, we fought against Tenryu, and although he couldn't beat us, I was impressed with his bravery in his willingness to battle it out with The Legion of Doom. A few months later, I heard he was in the United States, so I signed him to a contract. He has been everything we could have wanted and more. As far as seeing him more often,

(Continued on page 63)

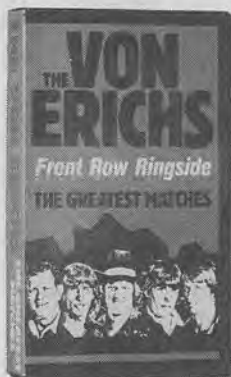


The British Bulldogs say they don't bring their bulldog Matilda to the ring with them anymore because she had a rough time from her enemies in the WWF.



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INTRODUCING

DERRICK DUKES

SOME PEOPLE NEVER know what they want to do with their lives. But from the time he was eight years old, Derrick Dukes knew that he wanted to spend his life in the squared circle.

"At first, I didn't wanna watch it," Dukes said. "But my friend came over and my mother made me watch it. We were watching The Sheik, and Pampero Firpo, and Ernie Ladd. Maybe it was the violence, but I liked the screaming and hollering. After one time, I was hooked."

Fifteen years later, Dukes and Ricky Rice—a.k.a. The Top Guns—are the most popular tag team in the AWA and top contenders to the World tag belts held by Pat Tanaka and Paul Diamond. But Dukes, a 6'2", 235-pounder who was born in Boston but raised in Barberton, Ohio, had to overcome several pratfalls and a physical obstacle to get there.

"I had a hard time participating in sports until junior high because I had really bad asthma," he said. "Eventually, I grew out it and I started playing basketball, football, and baseball. I was pretty decent. I was the sixth man on the basketball team and we played in the '82 state tournament.

"What I really wanted to do, though, was wrestle, but they
(Continued on page 58)



Derrick Dukes, one-half of The Top Guns along with Ricky Rice, wanted to be a professional wrestler from the time he was eight. Dukes combines an impressive physique with ever-improving skills and a lot of desire.

The Top Guns are hot and Derrick Dukes is where he wants to be! Life couldn't be any better for this 6'3", 235-pound fan favorite, who overcame an early obstacle—and the limitations of high school wrestling coaches—to make a career in the ring



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July 1984/Stories include: Rich, Billy Jack, Valiant, Von Erich.

August 1984/Stories include: Garvin, Sullivan, Freebirds, Street.

September 1984/Stories include: Von Erich, Piper, Steamboat, Billy Jack.

October 1984/Stories include: Flair, Rhodes, Magnum T.A., Bundy.

November 1984/Stories include: Billy Jack, Von Erich, Piper, Brody.

December 1984/Stories include: Martel, Santana, Von Erich, Steamboat.

January 1985/Stories include: Von Erich, Warriors, Albano, Koloffs.

February 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Santana, Billy Jack, Nikita Koloff.

March 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Warriors, Martel, Rude.

April 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Von Erich-Adams, Flair, Tonga & Snuka.

May 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Backlund, Santana, Rich.

June 1985/Stories include: Rhodes, Windham, Rich, Hogan.

July 1985/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Reed, Martel, Sunshine.

August 1985/BONUS 4-PG. COLOR SECTION! Plus: Warriors, Magnum T.A., Sheik & Volkoff, McGraw.

September 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Savage, R&R Express.

October 1985/Stories include: Flair, Windham, Shultz, Martel.

November 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Zbyszko, R&R Express, Von Erichs.

December 1985/Stories include: Rude, Fantastics, Muraco, Uncle Elmer.

January 1986/20th Anniversary Issue! 10 Greatest Wrestlers, Rhodes, Hogan, Sammartino.

February 1986/Stories include: Hogan, Orndorff, Flair, Hansen.

March 1986/Stories include: Von Erich, Duggan, Hansen-Martel.

April 1986/Stories include: Von Erich, Rude, Lugar, Hogan, Magnum T.A.

May 1986/Stories include: Zbyszko, Von Erichs, Santana-Ventura, Hillbillies.

June 1986/Stories include: Lugar, Hernandez, Flair-Bockwinkel, Hogan, T.A.

July 1986/Stories include: King Kong Bundy, Koloff vs. Graham, Ric Flair.

August 1986/Stories include: Snuka, Bulldogs, Freebirds, Warriors, Duggan.

September 1986/Stories include: Fantastics, Adonis, Morton-Flair, Brody.

October 1986/Stories include: Nikita-Magnum, Nord, Bruno, Kerry, Windham.

November 1986/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan-Orndorff, Von Erich.

December 1986/Stories include: Flair, Bockwinkel, Hogan, Gilbert, Nikita.

January 1987/Stories include: Heenan, Garvins, DiBiase, Borne & Sawyer.

February 1987/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Gordy, Steamboat-Roberts.

March 1987/Stories include: Windham, Nikita, Adias, Savage-Steamboat.

April 1987/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Rich-Lawler, R&R Express.

May 1987/Stories include: Flair-Nikita, Andre-Hogan, UWF, Windham, Hennig.

June 1987/Stories include: Flair-Windham, Can-Am's, Rhodes-Murdoch.

July 1987/Stories include: Cornette, Hyatt, Luger, Harts, Adams, Hansen.

August 1987/Stories include: Can-Am's, Luger vs. Nikita, Fantastics, Koko, Nord.

September 1987/Stories include: Koloffs, Harts, Duggan, Hennig, Hart.

October 1987/Stories include: Savage-Honky Tonk, Horsemen, Patera, Kerry.

November 1987/Stories include: Williams, Luger, Hogan-Khan, Rich.

December 1987/Stories include: Hogan, Windham, Lawler, Flair, Beefcake.

January 1988/Stories include: Nikita-Taylor, Warriors, DiBiase-Duggan.

February 1988/Stories include: Flair, Andre-Hogan, New Breed, Kerry.

March 1988/Stories include: Hogan, Luger-Sting, Calgary, Demolition.

April 1988/Special issue! Starrcade '87, Survivor Series, AWA & World Class. Also: Strike Force, Luger, Rockers.

May 1988/Stories include: Horsemen, Hogan, Flair, Fantastics, DiBiase.

June 1988/Stories include: Sting-Flair, DiBiase, Kerry, Nikita, Zenk.

July 1988/Stories include: Fantastics, Hogan, Windham, McMahon, Rich.

August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Windham-Luger split, Demolition, Lawler, Ellering.

September 1988/Stories include: Duggan vs. Andre, Hogan, Windham.

October 1988/Stories include: Rhodes, Fantastics, Hennig, Roberts-Rude.

November 1988/Stories include: Midnight Ex., DiBiase, Bossman, Brody.

January 1989/Stories include: Kevin Von, Rougeaus, Horsemen, Hogan.

February 1989/Stories include: Warriors, Ultimate-Hogan, Bigelow-Gordy.

March 1989/Stories include: Jarrett, Flair, Jake-Andre, Bigelow-Windham.

April 1989/Stories include: Bulldogs, Warriors, Andre, Hogan-Savage.

May 1989/Stories include: Steamboat, Savage-Hogan, Dusty, Valentine.

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Q&A

Each month, *The Wrestler* will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost in the fans' minds



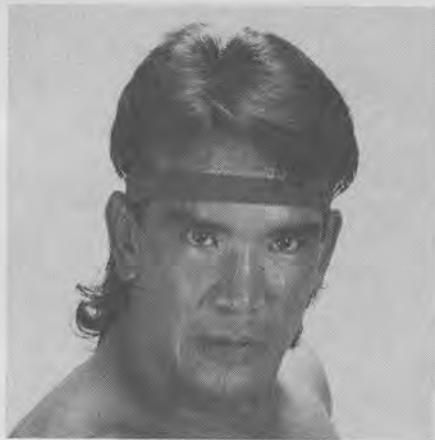
Rick Steamboat whips Ric Flair across the ring during their sensational NWA World title bout. Steamboat won the championship, ending Flair's fifth title reign.

Q: Rick, congratulations on winning the NWA title. The last time I spoke with you, eight months ago in an interview for the October 1988 edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, you were describing the reasons why you decided to leave wrestling for a while. Today, you're the World champion. You've really managed to come full circle in a very short time.

A: (laughs) That's true, Bobby. When I left the WWF after WrestleMania IV last year, I was seriously committed to spending as much time with my family as I could. But anybody who's ever wrestled, anyone who's ever felt gold around his waist, always has the urge to return. That's why I decided to come back to the NWA. Luckily for me, everything has worked out well.

Q: That has to be the understatement of the year! First you pinned Flair in a tag team match on television, which was your very first match back in the NWA. Then you and he had a couple of altercations, but you seemed to come out of them unscathed. Finally, you and Flair locked up at Chi-Town Rumble, and it was one of the most exciting matches ever. After pinning Flair cleanly in the middle of the ring, it has to be considered one of the greatest comebacks in wrestling history.

A: I appreciate that, but I wouldn't exactly call my return a comeback. I wasn't really gone all that long,



RICK STEAMBOAT

WHICH MATCH WILL go down in history as the greatest of the 1980s? For the past two years, fans and experts have cited Rick Steamboat's victory over Randy Savage at WrestleMania III on March 29, 1987, as an example of wrestling at its finest. "The Dragon" captured the WWF Intercontinental title as he caught Savage in a small package to score one of the biggest wins of his career.

But that's ancient history.

Steamboat's brilliant victory over Ric Flair on February 20, 1989, in Chicago might have surpassed the Steamboat-Savage bout in terms of ferocity and sheer athletic brilliance. Add to that the fact that the NWA World title was at stake, and it made the impact of this confrontation all the greater.

Again, Steamboat used a small package to capture the title at the 23:06 mark, the greatest victory of a fantastic career. Suddenly, the NWA has a champion who will strive to defend his belt with honor. Immediately after his victory, Steamboat offered Flair a rematch—a gesture that showed he was a sportsman as well as a great athlete.

Assistant Editor Bob Smith spoke with Steamboat in his hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina, a few days after he upset Flair for the title.



Steamboat locks up Flair with a side headlock. The title match at Chi-Town Rumble was their first one-on-one encounter since Steamboat's much-heralded return to the NWA in January. They also had some classic battles for the World title back in the early 1980s.

and it's not like I was injured, or anything like that. Plus, when I returned in January, I was in the finest physical condition of my entire life. I was primed and ready to go. When I took on Flair and Barry Windham in that TV match, I felt like I could defeat any man in the whole world.

Q: And now you're the World champion, and it seems to have had a strange effect on the NWA, even on Flair. If you recall, Teddy Long ran into the ring when Tommy Young, the referee assigned to the

match, was knocked out. Long counted the pinfall, but even Flair isn't disputing it. He said you wrestled the match of your life, but now he wants to see you do it again.

A: Well, it was a conclusive victory. Some people say it was controversial, but I don't see any controversy about this match at all. Teddy Long is a licensed NWA referee, he was assigned as a secondary referee to the match, and it was his decision to come into the ring and count that pinfall. As far as I'm

concerned, as far as the NWA is concerned, Long's pinfall-count is every bit as valid as Young's. Flair is the type of man who usually points an accusing finger at others when he gets beat, but this time I have to give him some credit. He's taking his defeat like a man. But there's not a person who saw that match that can deny I had Ric's shoulders pinned to the mat for a clean three-count. Hey, Ric gave me the match of my life. I can't stomach his image, but I also can't argue with his greatness as a wres-

tlar. But, in the end, when it counted, I emerged as the better man.

Q: Many fans would agree with that, especially after you immediately agreed to give Flair a series of rematches. When Lex Luger came close to beating Flair at Starrcade '88 last December, Flair announced that he would never grant Luger another title shot—and he never did.

A: That's the biggest difference between me and Flair. He considers himself the greatest thing to ever happen to wrestling, but I consider him a total disgrace. For years he's used outside interference, unscrupulous managers, and blatant disregard for the rules in order to win and hold on to his five championships. He's been a shame to the NWA and to wrestling longer than anyone I've ever known. That's why it's so satisfying to be able to say that I'm the new World champion. I'm going to try to uphold the best traditions of wrestling during my title reign, the same way that legends like Jack Brisco and Pat O'Connor once did. My goal is to be an honorable, fighting champion.

Q: Do you anticipate your schedule of title defenses to get in the way of your family life, though? Your wife and baby were the reasons you left wrestling in the first place.

A: That's true. But as you can see, my family is with me wherever I go now. Bonnie is my greatest source of inspiration, and it's a thrill to have her come to ringside with me. And Ricky, my little boy, is my best friend in the whole world. If my family needed me to, I would just walk away from my title and my wrestling career—they mean that much to me. But, thankfully, everything is in place for me now. I've got my family, I've got the World title, and everything is as good as it could possibly be.

Q: Things are likely to heat up very quickly, though. In the coming



Steamboat says the inspiration he received from his son was one of the main reasons he returned to the ring. "The Dragon" claims he's ready to meet *all* challengers, even fan favorites like Sting and Lex Luger.

weeks, you've got several rematches slated against Flair, and there are other men, such as Steve Williams, Barry Windham, and Mike Rotundo, who are clamoring for shots at the title.

A: That's all fine by me, because I intend to be a fighting champion. Anyone who wants a title shot will get one.

Q: Really? You'd even put your title on the line against other fan favorites like Sting, Luger, or Michael Hayes?

A: I would be a hypocrite if I didn't do that, so the fans can count on seeing some great scientific matches in the months ahead. I pride my-

self on being a *complete* wrestler, and the men you mentioned are great in their own right. How can I be considered a true champion if I don't take on everybody in the NWA top 10? Actually, it would be a real pleasure to lock up with some great scientific wrestlers for a change.

Q: That's quite a change from the previous champion.

A: There's no way anybody's ever going to confuse me with Flair, that's for sure! (*laughs*)

Q: Now comes the big question. For a long time, people have considered your WrestleMania III match against Randy Savage to be one of

the greatest of the decade, maybe one of the greatest of modern times. But now, after this latest classic against Flair, people are starting to call your title victory one of the best, as well. How do you feel about this?

A: I feel very flattered by it. Whenever anybody puts your name among the "best" of anything, it's a great compliment.

Q: Which match do you think was better?

A: That's a tough call. The match against Savage went about 14 minutes, but the raw hatred that existed between us drove us to a fever pitch. Add to that the fact that 93,000 people were watching us, and it was the perfect setting for a great match. But against Flair, I think my performance was every bit as good, and possibly even better. I had a lot to prove in that match. Flair had insulted my pride in the weeks before that match, so that drove me. I wanted to show I'm as good now as I was before my hiatus, and that drove me. And I wanted that title. I wanted to be the NWA World champion so bad I could taste it.

Q: And now you've done it. Do you think that upon your return you might have peaked too soon? It was only about a month after you came back that you defeated Flair.

A: That's a very interesting point. Even by my own timetable, I never would have believed that I would have reached my goal so quickly. But, as I said before, I have an even more important goal now—and that's to erase all the damage that Flair has done to the NWA over the past few years. Hopefully, I'll be the kind of champion that everybody, including all the little kids out there, can look up to. I wouldn't be able to face my little son every day if I didn't do my very best all the time, and that's a good goal for everybody everywhere. Just do your best. Nobody could ever ask for anything more. ☐

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SPOT ★LIGHTS...

From time to time, *The Wrestler* will shine its spotlight on an outstanding wrestler, manager, or tag team. These are unforgettable highlights of the sport's greatest stars, compiled by the largest staff of editors and photographers in wrestling journalism

KERRY VON ERICH

KERRY VON ERICH knows what it is to be a champion, and he knows what it takes to overcome the obstacles a champion faces. His 11-year career has been filled with enough misfortune to drive a dozen men out of the sport. But, as Kerry would tell you, he's a Von Erich, and that represents more than just a name.

"Ever since we were boys," Kerry recalls, "our dad [Fritz] told us we had a special responsibility to do good things in the world, especially in the ring. He always reminded us that a lot of people look up to the Von Erichs, and that we could never let the people down."

Kerry says his father's words have helped him win many titles, but more than words inspired him to win the NWA World title from Ric Flair on May 6, 1984. Three months earlier, his brother David, whom many had picked to be the next champion, died. Kerry received the shot at Flair in his brother's place.

But as important and memorable as that victory was, today it's just a distant memory for Kerry. Now he is obsessed with the defeat of Jerry "The King" Lawler, who won the World Class title from him at SuperClash III in Chicago on December 13, 1988.

"Look at what a poor excuse for a champion Lawler's become," Kerry said. "The AWA stripped him of their title, and I'm surprised World Class hasn't done the same. He always talks about honor, but that's all it is—talk. I've beaten him for the belt before,



Kerry Von Erich is pursued by autograph seekers before he enters the ring. Kerry and his brothers have been among the most popular athletes in Texas for many years.

and I'll do it again soon."

Lawler, traditionally a fan favorite, is anything but a favorite when he travels to Texas to face Kerry. Even before SuperClash, the two had met many times, with nearly every match ending in controversy. Kerry blames Lawler for the confusion.

"He's always bringing some kind of object into the ring, or hitting me with a sucker-punch," Kerry accused. "He knows he doesn't have the ability to beat me, so he cheats. He can deny it all he wants, but everybody's seen him do it. He's a disgrace."

"The King" has a pointed response to his rival's accusations.

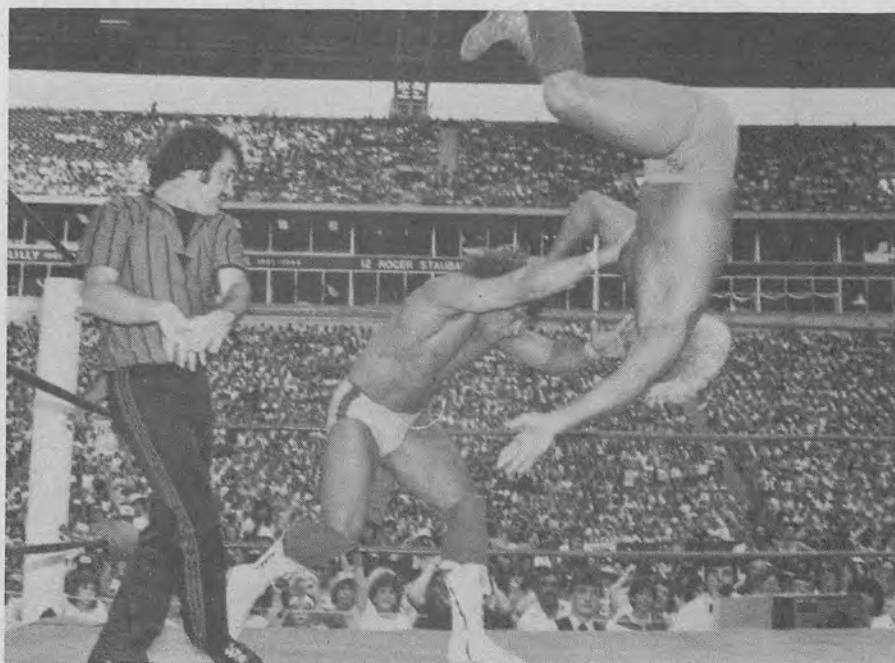
"Don't make us laugh, Kerry," Lawler remarked. "You're not as pure as you say you are. Stop trying to fool the people. We both do what we have

to do to win. Bending the rules from time to time is part of the game, a game you're a master of. So stop whining and complaining and get in the ring."

In addition to his pursuit of Lawler, Kerry and his brother Kevin are busy trying to regain the World Class tag team title they lost to Robert Fuller and Jimmy Golden on February 17 in Dallas.

"In many ways, going for those belts with Kevin is more important to me than the World Class title," Kerry related. "Nothing makes me prouder than sharing a championship with my brother. And whoever says I can't go after the tag title and Lawler at the same time is gonna find out I'm tougher than they thought I was. The Von Erichs won't be denied!" □

November 1982: Kerry armlocks former NWA World champion Harley Race (below). November 1983: Kerry, Kevin, and David Von Erich dropkick Freebird Buddy Roberts (right).



May 1984: Kerry tosses Ric Flair to the mat on his way to winning the NWA World championship (above). December 1984: Von Erich prepares Chris Adams for a slam (right); Adams has also been a close friend of the Von Erichs.



December 1987: Kerry rakes Al Perez' face on the cage (left). December 1988: His face a mask of blood, Kerry whips Jerry Lawler across the ring at SuperClash III (above).

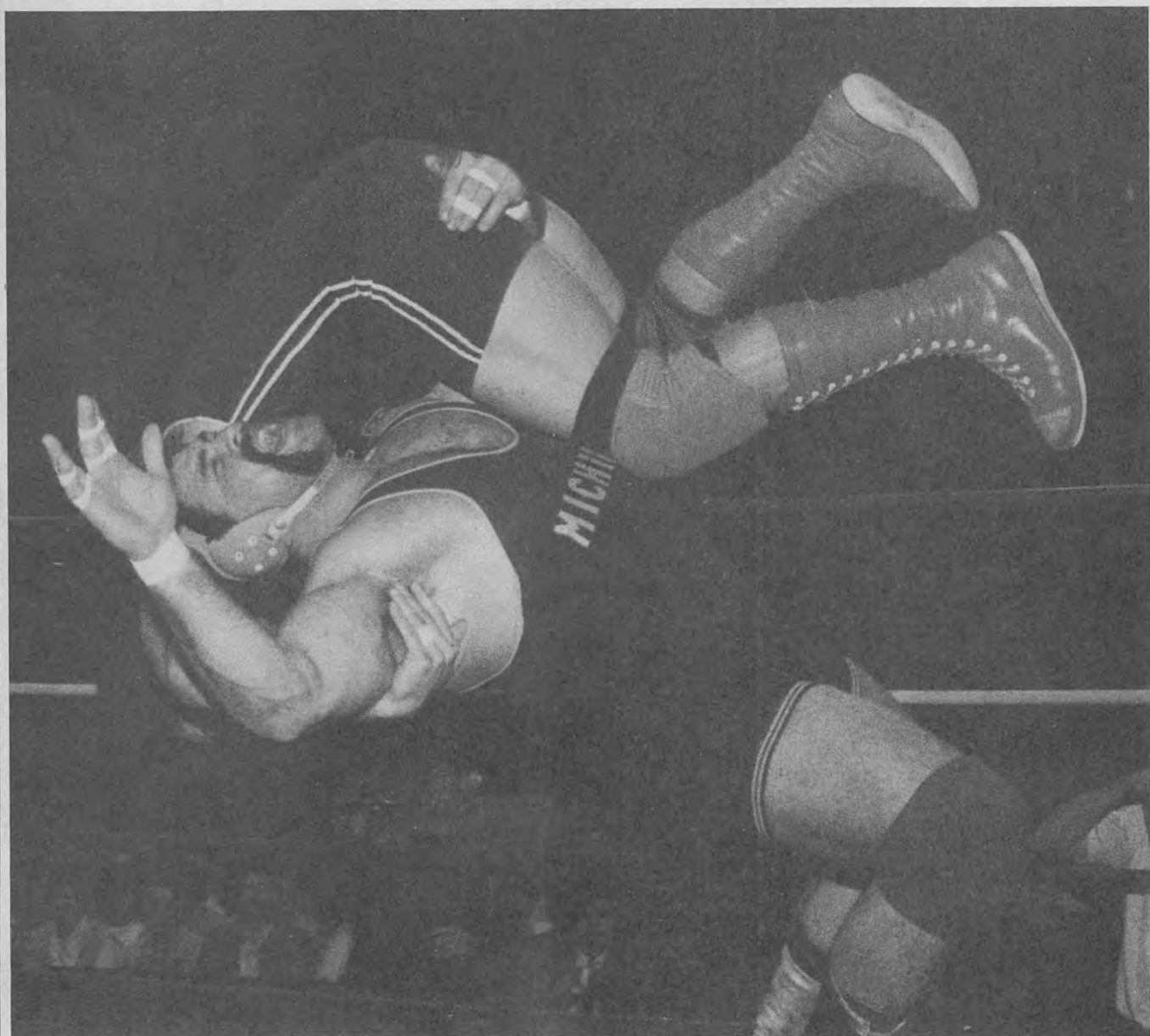
THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES

RAY



RICK STEINER

Each month
THE WRESTLER'S panel of experts
will offer their candid opinions of one
of wrestling's stars. Whether an up-and-coming
youngster or an established superstar in his own right,
our panel will always be frank and honest without fear of reprisal



Rick Steiner executes a suplex on Mike Rotundo, his former partner in The Varsity Club. Although he often acts confused, Steiner is a skillful scientific wrestler who excelled in high school and collegiate competition.



CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"You know, daddy, a lot of people are quick to call Steiner a crazy man, but he's crazy just like I am. After all, he was good enough to win the NWA TV title from Mike Rotundo, wasn't he? Rotundo has since regained the belt, but Steiner has proven to be a popular wrestler, a guy the fans can trust. His suplexes are as good as those of anybody I've ever seen. Let's hear it for Steiner, Alex, and Spike—the NWA's new breed of champions, baby!"

Capt. Lou Albano, long known as "The Guiding Light," has guided 13 tag teams to an unmatched 16 WWF World tag team titles.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"Ever see Steiner's belly-to-back suplex? I don't know how that big lug hasn't killed somebody with that thing. At first, it looks like he's going to deliver a spinecrusher, but then he falls straight back. The opponent lands hard—very hard—on his neck and head. Now, if anybody else used this maneuver, I'd think it was great. But with Steiner, who's about as bright as a 10-watt refrigerator bulb, it's frightening. They ought to ban that mental midget from wrestling."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rulebreakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.



PROF. TORU TANAKA

"It is clear from listening to Steiner speak that he is not of sufficient mental capability to be a success in mat endeavors. In Japan, someone who needs therapy, such as Steiner, would not be permitted to compete until his problems were rectified. A man who talks to his left hand and uses a variety of dogs for managers is not someone who should rank as a true championship contender. He is to be laughed at and pitied, not admired. He is a disgrace."

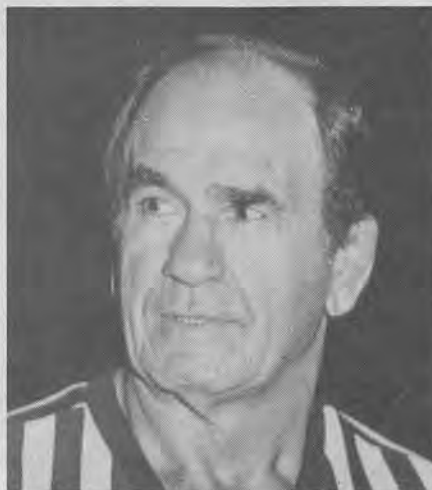
Prof. Tanaka, a three-time co-holder of the WWF World tag team title with Mr. Fuji, is currently a successful actor.



LARRY HENNIG

"You *know* I'm not very fond of a guy who panders to the fans, but I get a huge kick out of Steiner. He's the kind of guy who does whatever he wants anytime he wants to do it, and who can argue with that? Plus, this guy is 248 pounds of solid muscle, and he knows more maneuvers than most of the guys he wrestles. The split from Kevin Sullivan and The Varsity Club hasn't changed him a bit. Sure, he's loony as a fruitcake, but I can't help but like him."

Larry "The Ax" Hennig is a four-time former AWA World tag team champion; he held three of those titles with Harley Race.



LOU THESZ

"Steiner is an energetic, well-schooled competitor, but I think he needs to calm down a bit. During his matches, he gets a bit too involved leading the crowd in cheers, and in pulling little tricks against his opponents when the referee isn't looking. It was his lack of concentration that led to the loss of his NWA TV title. He's exciting and he's fun, but Rick needs to develop a solid game plan for success, instead of fooling around all the time."

Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-round wrestler in history.

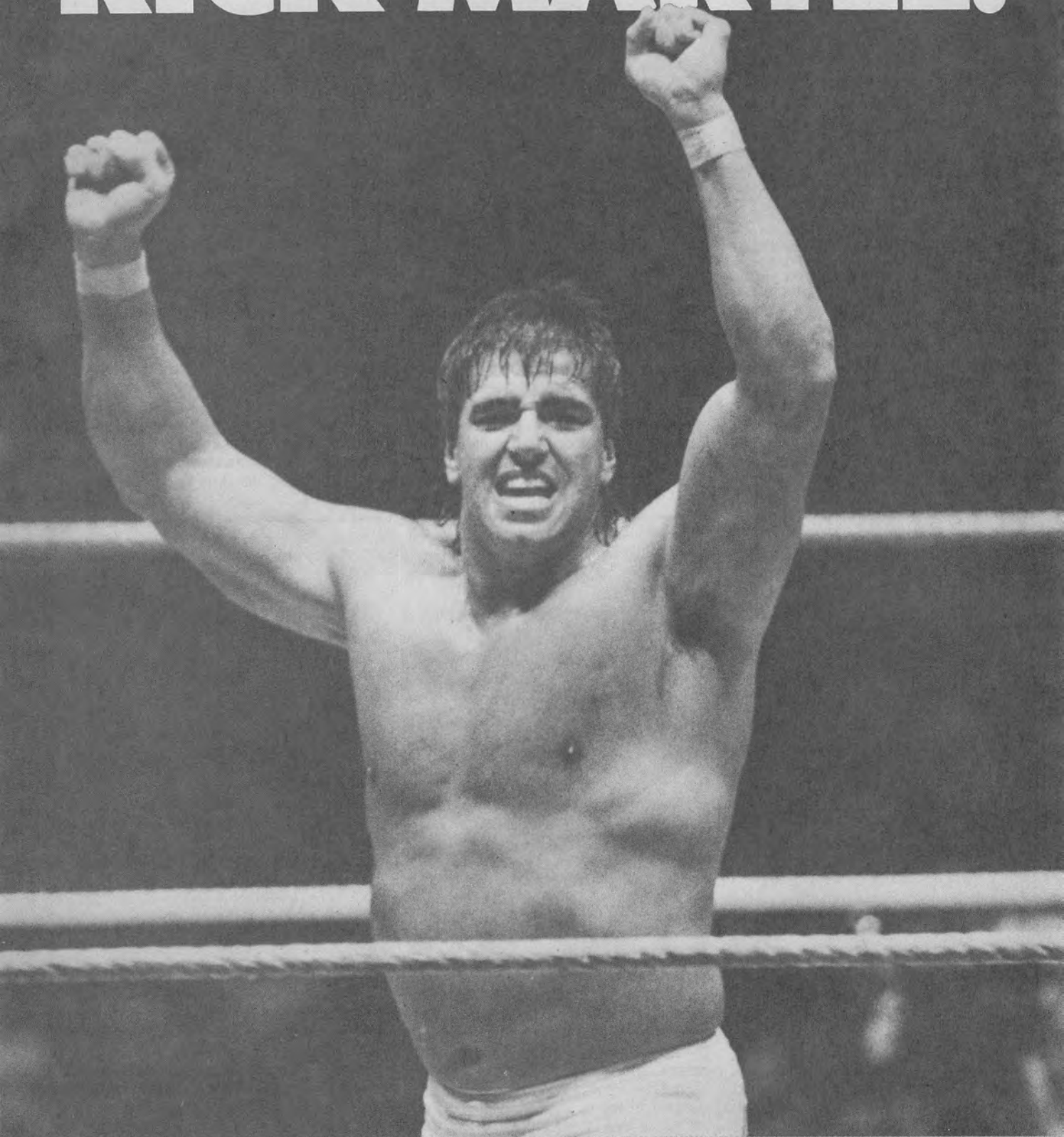


JACK BRISCO

"To me, Steiner is one of the best things to happen to the NWA in a long time. For months, he was at the mercy of Sullivan, but he proved his intelligence by being his own man and breaking away from The Varsity Club. Today, Steiner is vowing to regain the NWA TV title from Mike Rotundo, and I wouldn't bet against him. To me, Steiner is Rotundo's equal—they're both great scientific wrestlers. All Rick needs is the chance to meet Mike without any outside interference." □

Jack Brisco is a two-time former NWA World champion, and a three-time former NWA World tag team champion with brother Jerry.

RICK MARTEL:



Returning to the sport after recovering from severe back and neck injuries, Rick Martel has been more than impressive—he's wrestling with a fury he hasn't displayed in years. Today's Martel may be the best ever!

READY TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE OF GREATNESS

By Bob Smith

IF YOU WERE to ask a group of fans who the dominant world champions of the '80s have been, you'd probably get several names in response. You'll hear about the exploits of Hulk Hogan, Ric Flair, Randy Savage, and Curt Hennig, and rightfully so. They were all great champions, all with lengthy title reigns.

But how about Rick Martel?

For 20 months during 1984 and 1985, this Canadian star held the AWA World title with pride, making defenses against many of the sport's top competitors. Combining aerial skills, outstanding stamina, and a wealth of strength, Martel is the type of wrestler who should have a much better reputation than the one he carries.

Actually, Martel has always been a championship-caliber wrestler, but serious injuries have sidelined him for extended periods and, as a result, tarnished his image.

Due to circumstances beyond his control, Rick Martel has become to wrestling what Jack Clark is to baseball. Though he has an abundance of talent, he is better known for his injuries and long layoffs than his skills.

His latest setback, severe back and neck injuries caused in an attack by Demolition, kept him out of action for seven months. According to several doctors, he shouldn't have come back in seven years. But Martel has a lot of heart and has recently begun one of the most courageous comebacks in recent memory.



Rick Martel rolls King Haku into a Boston crab, a maneuver that has also been used effectively against him.

"I've never seen such a miraculous comeback," enthused noted WWF expert Thomas Pilliard. "By all rights, Martel should be retired. It's a tribute to his drive and fighting spirit that we're seeing him back in the ring again."

That drive and fighting spirit came into question on December 29, 1985, at the Byrne Meadowlands Arena in New Jersey, when Martel relinquished his AWA title to rugged Stan Hansen. Martel submitted to Hansen's variation of the Boston crab, the "Brazos Valley backbreaker." To the uninformed eye, it looked as if Martel had simply given up. But four

days earlier, Hansen had severely injured Martel's back during a match in St. Paul, Minnesota. Time after time, Hansen rammed Martel's back into the steel ringpost outside the ring.

Martel's ravaged back caused him to lose not only the title, but some of his prestige in the eyes of many fans. After all, *real* champions never submit. Deserving or not, Martel was labeled a quitter.

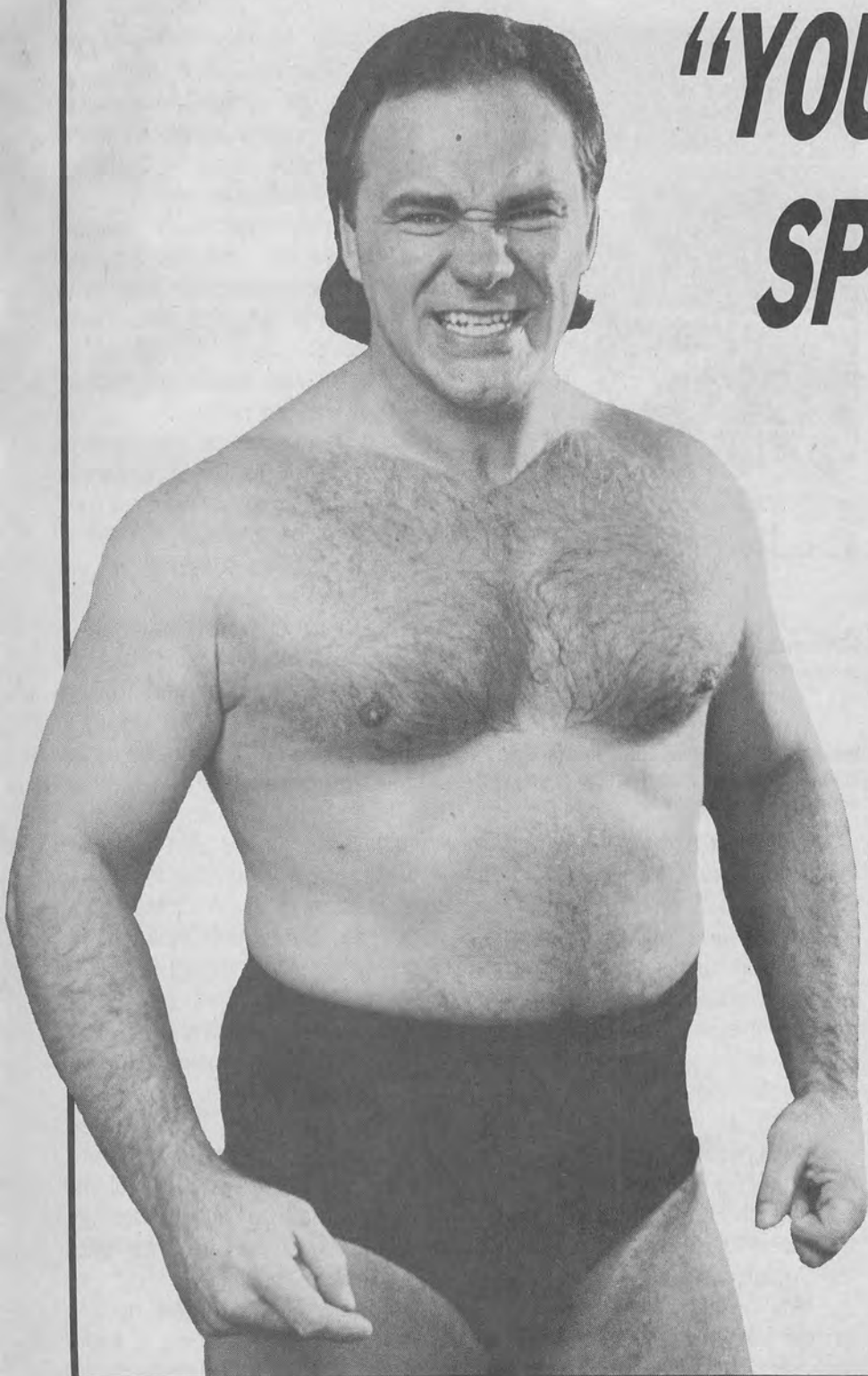
"That was an unfair rap," complained Verne Gagne, who was in attendance for the bout. "Martel is one of the bravest men in our sport, and he proved it against Hansen. He was suffering from a host of injuries to his lower back, and he really shouldn't have been anywhere near a ring. He was a lot closer to being a hero than a quitter on that night."

Two years later, Martel gained a measure of revenge—in a different federation against a different man. Martel forced Jim Neidhart of The Hart Foundation to submit to a Boston crab on October 27, 1987, in Syracuse, New York, winning the WWF World tag team title for himself and his Strike Force partner, Tito Santana.

"To Rick, it was sweet vindication," noted Pilliard. "He beat Neidhart the same way Hansen beat him. For two solid years, Martel had to put up with all the whispers that he had given up, that he quit. Now, he was back on top again."

Unfortunately for Martel, he and Santana didn't have long to savor
(Continued on page 50)

AWA World Champion Larry Zbyszko

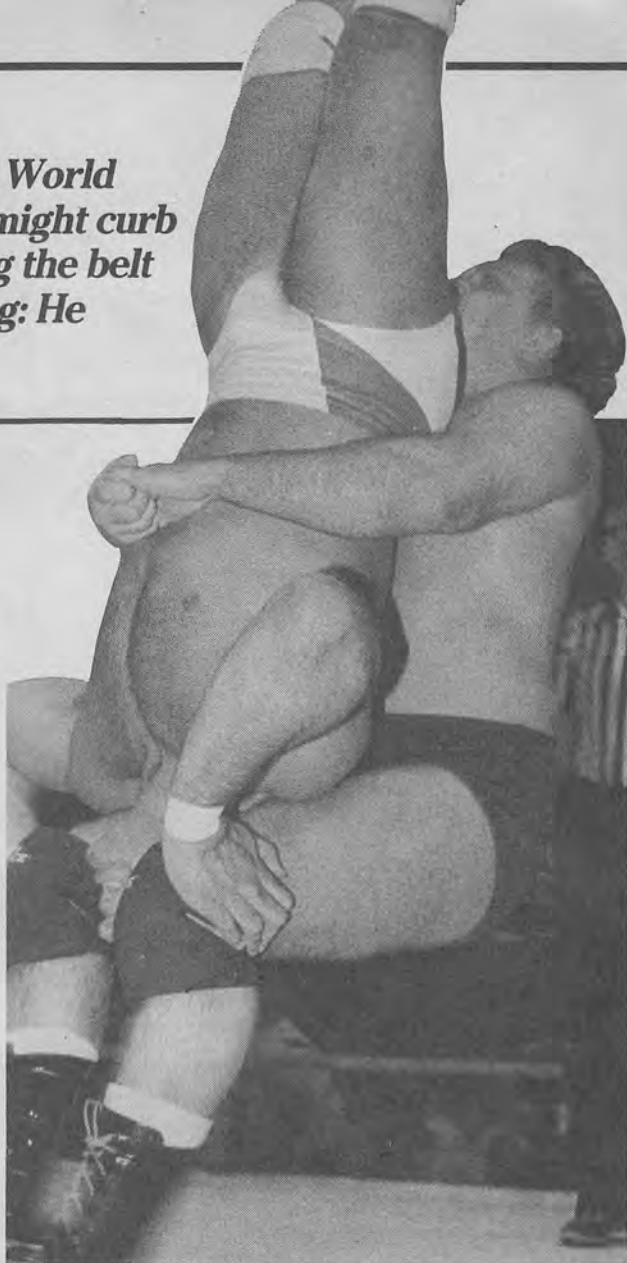


***“YOU MUTANT
SPUDHEADS
BETTER
RESPECT
ME—OR
ELSE!”***

By Bob Smith

Photos by Bill Apter & Bruce Krietzman

When Larry Zbyszko captured the AWA World championship, many experts thought it might curb his outlandish behavior. Instead, winning the belt has prompted Zbyszko to issue a warning: He wants respect, and he wants it now!



Larry Zbyszko hits Tom Zenk with a blow to the back (left) and piledrives him (above). They were the last two men in the ring at the AWA World title battle royal. Zbyszko eliminated Zenk and won the belt.

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE is rated PG—parental guidance suggested. Larry Zbyszko is about to sound off about life as the World champion of the AWA, and about his top challengers.

Larry, what do you think of Tom Zenk?

"Pretty boy punk. He should go back and get in touch with that other teen dream, Ricky Martel, so they can reform their classic tag team of years past, The Cutesy-Poo Connection."

How about Wahoo McDaniel?

"The greatest Indian wrestler of

his time. Unfortunately, that time was 1969. Today, a wooden Indian has better lateral movement, and weighs about 250 pounds less."

What about the fans, Larry?

"Those unwashed cretins don't have the common sense they were born with. If they did, they'd realize that finally they have a champion they can look up to. Instead, all they do is yell 'Larry Sucks!' Stupid spudheads. It looks like I'm going to have to teach the fools around here a lesson."

It took Zbyszko 14 years to gain his first world championship. But if there were a championship belt for outspoken commentary, this man would have won it years ago. Today, the man who calls himself the "Living Legend" is on his soapbox once again, demanding that the fans respect him and his accomplishments.

"Look what I did during that battle royal," reasoned Zbyszko, recalling his title victory on February 7 in St. Paul, Minnesota. "I emerged as the victor over 17

(Continued on page 54)



Photos by David Fitzgerald

ULTIMATE WARRIOR'S MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: Destroy Randy Savage For Hulk Hogan

By Liz Hunter

IMAGINE THE ULTIMATE Warrior, clad in a trenchcoat and wide-brimmed hat, entering a telephone booth. He removes a small video player from his pocket, presses a button, and hears the following message:

Good morning, Mr. Warrior. The man you see on your screen is Randy Savage, the current World Wrestling Federation champion. Recently, this man has callously turned his back on the fans, abused his lovely manager, Eliza-

beth, and, most importantly, attacked his partner in the tag team known as the Megapowers, Hulk Hogan.

Your mission, Warrior, if you choose to accept it, is to track down Savage and defeat him.

When The Ultimate Warrior wrestled Randy Savage, he proved he had the skills necessary to become the new WWF champion. But was he striving for personal glory, or looking to avenge Savage's betrayal of Hulk Hogan?

Whether it is a title match or a non-title confrontation is not important. The main thing is to destroy Savage's chances against Hogan in WrestleMania V. The federation's future is at stake.

Should you be pinned or defeated over the course of your campaign, the federation will disavow any knowledge of your actions.

Good luck, Ultimate. This message will self-destruct in five seconds.

A secret mission? Perhaps. The Warrior's recent series of matches against Savage have shown that he is a man capable of winning a world title at any time. These thrilling bouts have brought sellout

crowds to WWF arenas across the country.

But there is more to these matches than meets the eye. This story has become a tale of friendship and honor, of devotion and trust. Sadly, it is not about the friendship of Savage and Hogan, once known as the Megapowers. That partnership fades further into history with each new accusation and betrayal. Instead, it is about a quieter friendship—the one between Hogan and The Ultimate Warrior.

It is apparent that the new harmony between these two fan favorites has sent the Warrior on a mission: Destroy Randy Savage for

Hulk Hogan. Unfortunately, while Warrior has shown that he has the physical skills to get the job done, it is proving to be nearly impossible—thanks to the reborn cunning of the WWF titleholder.

While the friendship between Hogan and the Warrior is no secret, the fact that Hogan has taken the Warrior under his wing as the federation's fledgling superstar has received little publicity. Ever since the massive musclemen entered the federation in the summer of 1987, Hogan has fostered a strong respect for the muscular youngster.

"Hogan liked the Warrior be-
(Continued on page 56)

Ultimate Warrior kicks Savage as he's draped upside-down. Warrior could be fighting for himself and Hulk Hogan.



Stling and Lex Luger are two of the best-looking, most popular, most talented wrestlers in the NWA. Both have an incredible power attack and, ever since Ric Flair held off Luger at Starrcade '88, both have been considered the top two contenders to Barry Windham's U.S. title.

They're also tag team partners and very good friends. So, back in early January, the editors of *The Wrestler* struck a gentlemen's agreement with both men: If Sting won the title from Windham, Luger would provide us with a first-hand report. If Luger won the title from Windham, Sting would provide us with a first-hand report. They were eager to cooperate.

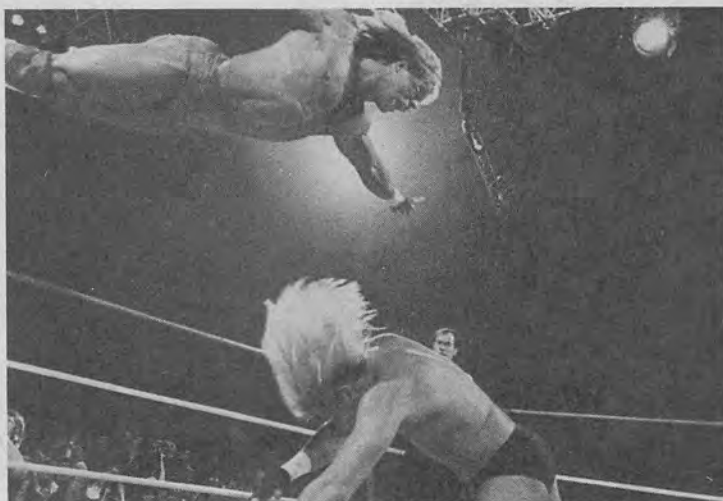
On February 20, at The Chi-Town Rumble in Chicago, Luger broke Windham's hold on the U.S. belt with a shocking victory after 10 minutes and 44 seconds of grueling action. True to the agreement, Sting (who pinned Butch Reed earlier in the evening) filed the following report.

LEX LUGER WINS THE U.S. TITLE



**Sting's
Exclusive
Report To
The Wrestler**

When Lex Luger won the U.S. title from Barry Windham on February 20 in Chicago, nobody was happier than his best friend, Sting. In this *Wrestler* exclusive, the "Stinger" files his firsthand report on this magnificent event



Barry Windham has Lex Luger down and on the ropes (left). Luger goes for the sunset flip in pursuit of a pin (above).

Photos by Brian Tirpak

By Sting

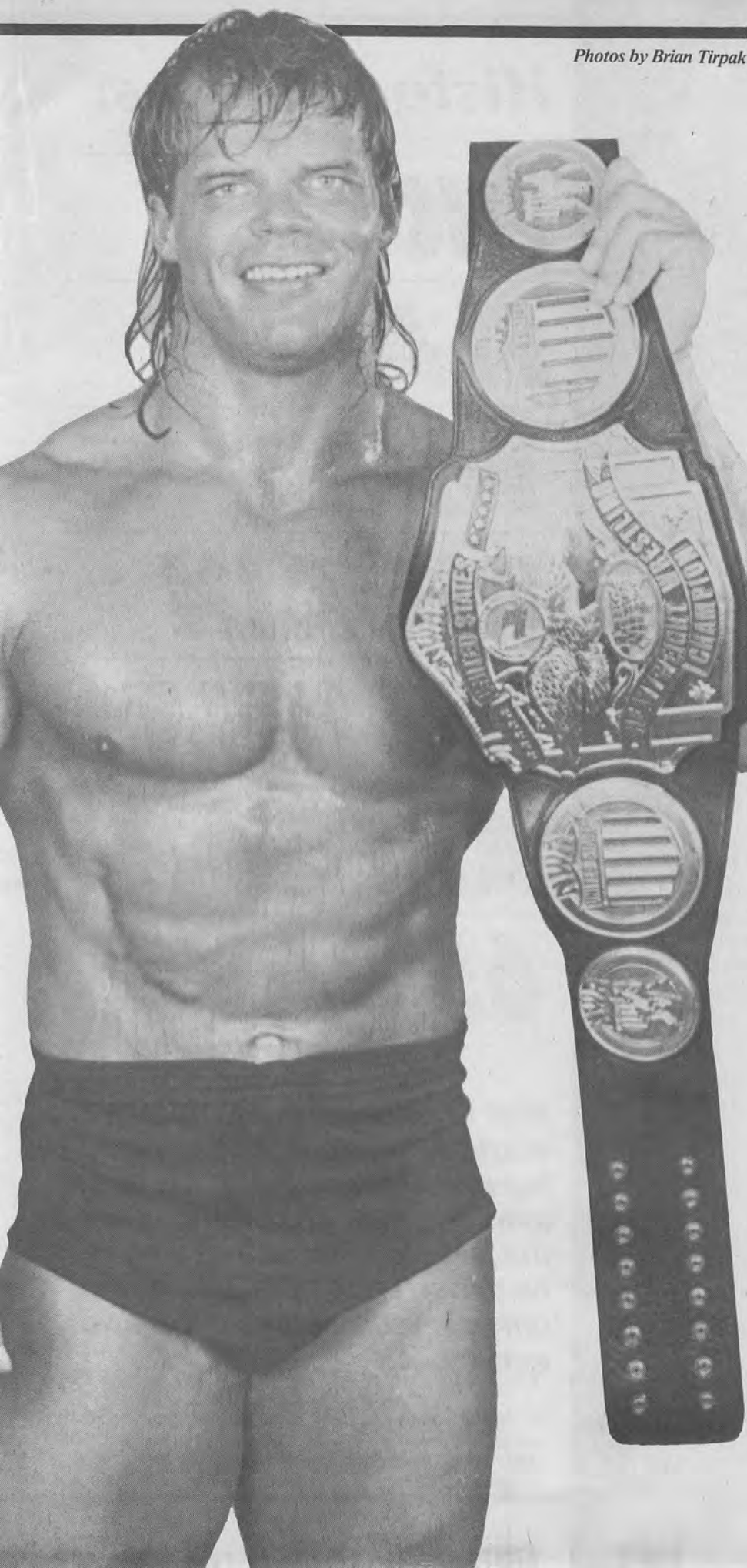
WHAT A MATCH! What a great match! You know, I've been watching this sport long enough to know a great effort when I see one, and let me tell you something, Lex Luger did something on February 20 in Chicago that I just couldn't believe! He was down, he was down and hurt, but he somehow managed to find enough energy to get his shoulder up just when it looked like Windham's belly-to-back suplex had done him in. That's more than mental perseverance. That's guts!

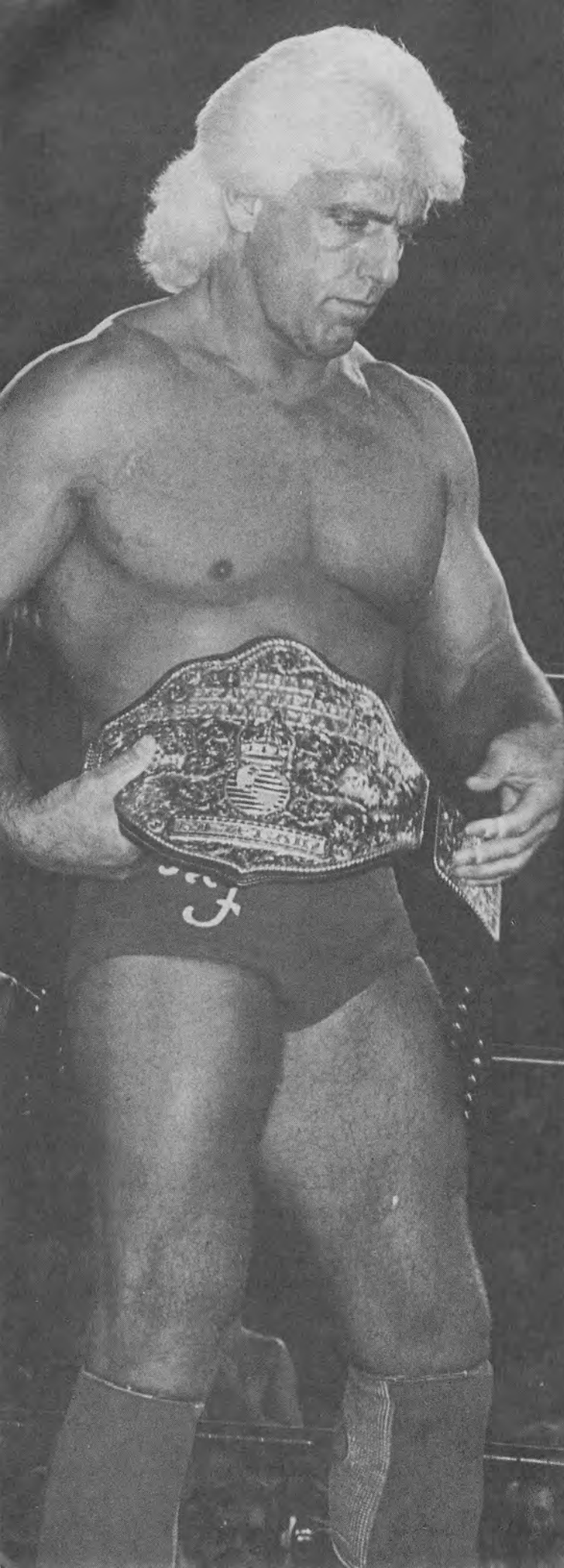
In case you don't know what I'm talking about, Lex was in real trouble. He was bleeding from the forehead and down on the mat, totally in pain. I really felt for him, because Windham's right hand was in bad shape, too, and would have been easy prey if Luger were 100 percent. Anyway, Windham managed to lift Lex to the top rope—which gives you an idea of how weakened Lex was—then delivered this devastating suplex! I mean, I *felt* it when Lex hit the mat.

Well, it looked like it was over. Windham came down with an elbow, then covered him and came within a fraction of a second of getting the three-count. But that wasn't all. Windham picked up Lex again and delivered an awesome belly-to-back suplex. Windham bridged Lex this time, and the referee made the count. But just before the three-count, Lex lifted his shoulder. Meanwhile, Windham had *his* shoulders down on the mat, so he had inadvertently pinned himself! The match was over and Lex was the new champ!

Now here's the catch: Windham lifted his left shoulder, too, only it's hard to say whether he

(Continued on page 60)





History Proves:

RIC

FLAIR

WILL

REGAIN

HIS BELT

AFTER

65 DAYS!

Rick Steamboat holds the NWA World championship belt now, but rest assured that it's only on loan. Ric Flair has proven over the last eight years that when he doesn't have the belt, it's only a matter of time before he gets it back

Ric Flair may not be the NWA World champion now but, if the past is any indication, he'll win the belt back very soon. The "Nature Boy" has regained the title four times.

By Craig Peters

STOP THE GLOATING! While Ric Flair-haters around the world are rejoicing over Rick Steamboat's February 20 victory for the NWA World title, several facts bear repeating before we go any further.

● Ric Flair has dominated the NWA World title in the 1980s. Since September 17, 1981, the total time he *hasn't* had the belt around his waist is significantly less than one year.

● Besides Steamboat, four other men have held the World title since Flair won his first in 1981: Harley Race, Kerry Von Erich, Dusty Rhodes, and Ronnie Garvin. None of these men are still wrestling in the NWA. None of these men currently hold a championship belt. In other words, Flair has survived the flukes and gone on to prove he's the best.

● And now here's something to munch on: The average time it has taken Flair to regain the belt is only 65.25 days. And, if you wipe out the 167 days it took for Flair to regain the belt from Race in 1983, the average length of his last three beltless "reigns" is a mere 31.33 days.

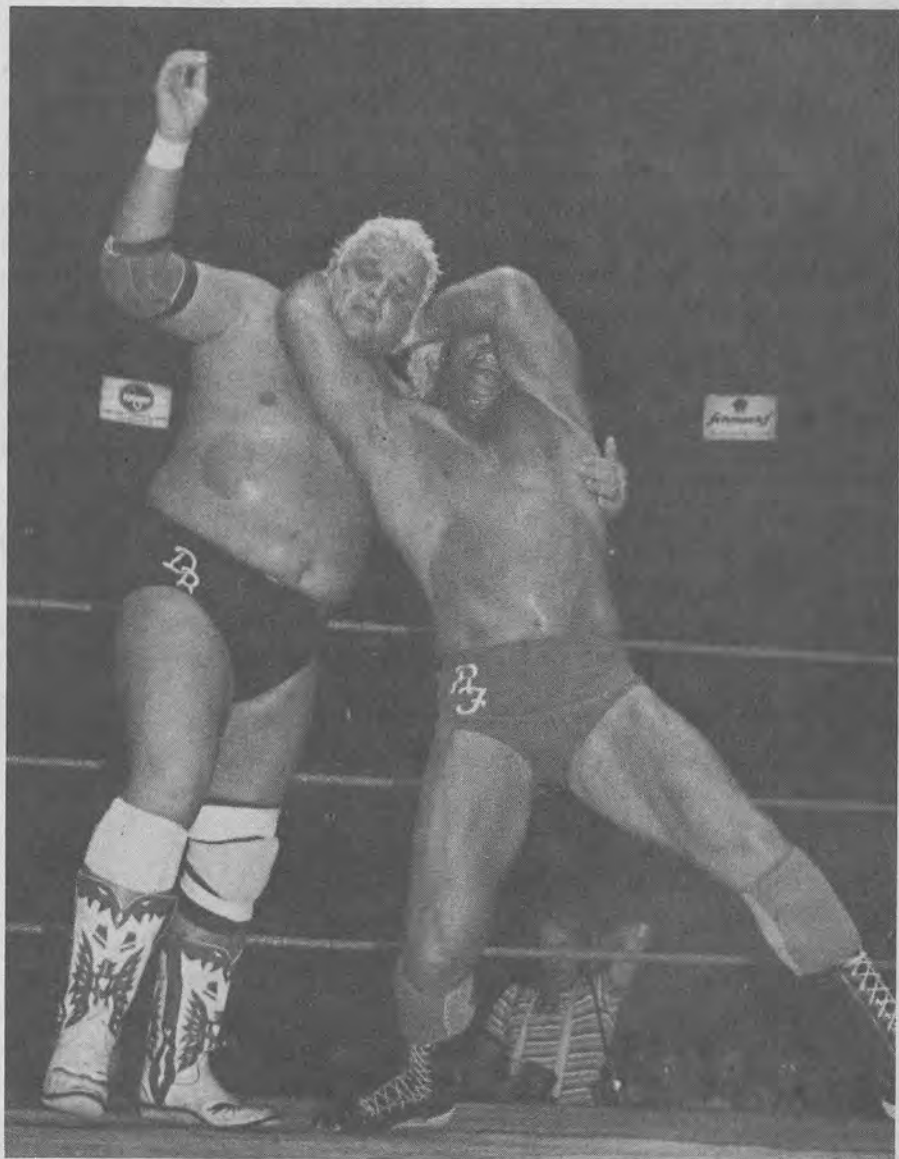
In other words, if you're a Rick Steamboat fan, enjoy the party while it lasts. History proves: The "Dragon's" fire should be extinguished by the time May rolls around.

"That's right, men, and I'm glad you pointed that out," Flair said. "It just goes to prove that not only is the 'Nature Boy' the longest lasting champion, he's also the shortest lasting non-champion. You know, boys, that belt looks pretty good around my waist. That's because it was *made* for me."

Flair's arrogant confidence is one of the main reasons why he has so dominated the NWA title. Every time he goes into the ring,



Flair leaps at Harley Race during the 1983 match in which he regained the World title from Race (above left). Flair rolls up Kerry Von Erich in 1984 for the pin to win back the title he'd lost to Kerry just 18 days earlier (above right). The "Nature Boy" snapmares Dusty Rhodes on the way to regaining the World belt for a third time in 1986 (below).



he doesn't merely *expect* to walk out with the belt, he *knows* he is going to walk out with the belt. And when he walks into the ring as a challenger, his game plan might change, but the confidence remains the same: He doesn't *expect* to win. He *knows* he's going to win.

"That's something you just can't take lightly in a one-on-one sport," World Class champion Jerry Lawler said. "Above all else, wrestling is a mind game. That's why there's no one set *style* of wrestling that's successful, but there is one set *mindset* that's successful. Flair, Savage, Hogan, and myself might wrestle differently, but we all think the same way. We all think to win. Losing never enters our minds."

But for some reason, Flair is special. He doesn't strut around the ring because it looks good. He does it because that's just the way he feels. When he brings five beautiful women into the ring with him, he doesn't do it merely to show off. He's does it because that's the way Ric Flair lives. He's a confident man and, in wrestling, confidence translates into success.

Let's take a walk through recent NWA history.

Flair won his first World title on September 17, 1981, in Kansas City, Missouri, when he pinned archrival Dusty Rhodes in 23:43. He lost the title to Race on June

10, 1983, in St. Louis, Missouri, in a memorable best two-out-of-three falls match. Race won the first fall with a suplex at 11:10, but Flair rallied to win the middle fall with a figure-four leglock at 10:23. The deciding fall lasted only 6:17. Both men had their shoulders on the mat after a backdrop, but Race lifted his shoulders just prior to the three-count.

"That was my toughest loss," Flair admitted, "because Race was one of the greatest wrestlers I've ever faced and I wanted to prove that I could beat him. I brooded a little after that match because I wanted to hold the belt forever, and that's really why it took me so long to beat Race. I had to regain my confidence. When I did, I decided that Slick Ric was never gonna lose again."

Flair's victory over Race on November 24, 1983, in Greensboro, North Carolina, was significant for several reasons. It marked the first time the title changed hands in a steel cage, and it began Flair's shortest-ever title reign. He held the belt for less than seven months before losing to Kerry Von Erich in the "Parade of Champions" at Texas Stadium on May 6, 1984. In reality, a Flair victory that night would have been a miracle.

"There were over 43,000 fans on hand and I think every one of them was rooting for Kerry," Senior Editor Bill Apter said. "This was one of the rare instances in

wrestling where the home-court advantage was really strong."

Flair won the belt back 18 days later in Yokusuka City, Japan, with a decisive victory over Kerry. "No home-ring advantage there," Flair recalled. "That time, the crowd was on *my* side. The Japanese know a real wrestler when they see him."

The "Nature Boy" suffered another tough defeat on July 26, 1986, in Greensboro, when he



Ronnie Garvin chops Flair, who rallied in this 1987 match to regain the title he'd lost just two months earlier.

lost to Rhodes. But Flair had an excuse: He was worn down by an exhausting summer of title defenses. Once he had time to catch his breath, however, Flair needed only 14 days to regain the belt.

Since then, Flair's record has been outstanding. He lost the title to Ronnie Garvin on September 25, 1987, but needed only one rematch, two months later in Chicago, to regain his beloved belt. Flair's last two title reigns have proven that he's a much more dangerous man when he *doesn't* have the belt.

Hard to believe, isn't it? "Hard to believe that any wrestler has ever been like me," Flair said. "Sixty-five days? I guarantee, Steamboat'll never have it that long." □

RIC FLAIR: IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME

Winner	Loser	Date	Days With/ Without Belt
Ric Flair.....	Dusty Rhodes.....	9/17/81.....	+ 630
Harley Race.....	Ric Flair.....	6/10/83.....	-167
Ric Flair.....	Harley Race.....	11/24/83.....	+ 163
Kerry Von Erich.....	Ric Flair.....	5/6/84.....	-18
Ric Flair.....	Kerry Von Erich.....	5/24/84.....	+ 792
Dusty Rhodes.....	Ric Flair.....	7/26/86.....	-14
Ric Flair.....	Dusty Rhodes.....	8/9/86.....	+ 412
Ronnie Garvin.....	Ric Flair.....	9/25/87.....	-62
Ric Flair.....	Ronnie Garvin.....	11/26/87.....	+ 451
Rick Steamboat.....	Ric Flair.....	2/20/89.....	???

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August 1982/COLOR PINUP: Dino Bravo, Steamboat & Rich, Andre, Martel, Piper, Blassie.

January 1983/COLOR PINUP: Ken Patera, Rick Steamboat, Rich, Brody, Sullivan, Backlund.

February 1983/COLOR PINUP: Ivan Putski, Rhodes vs. Garvin, Snuka, Super Destroyer, Bockwinkel, Funk.

April 1983/COLOR PINUP: Superstar Graham, Mil Mascaras, Valentine, Orndorff, Hart.

June 1983/COLOR PINUP: Cowboy Bob Orton, Rick Martel, Von Erich, Slaughter, Muraco.

July 1983/COLOR PINUP: Ivan Koloff, Tommy Rich, Patera, Von Erich, Snuka.

August 1983/COLOR PINUP: Larry Zbyszko, Roddy Piper, Sullivan, Zbyszko, Von Erich, Wrestling II.

October 1983/COLOR PINUP: Junkyard Dog, Tommy Rich, Johnson, Adonis, Rhodes, Piper.

November 1983/COLOR PINUP: Roddy Piper, Harley Race, Santana, Mascaras, Ellering, Valiant, Race.

December 1983/COLOR PINUP: Wahoo McDaniel, Dusty Rhodes, Hayes, Steamboat, Hansen, DiBiase.

January 1984/COLOR PINUP: Harley Race, Rick Martel, Snuka, Freebirds, Dillon, Sawyer.

February 1984/COLOR PINUP: Jim Garvin & Sunshine, Greg Valentine, Super Destroyer, Race, Sawyer, Abdullah.

June 1984/COLOR PINUP: Dick Slater, Ted DiBiase, Wrestling II, Magnum T.A., Patera, Hogan.

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January 1985/COLOR PINUP: Tito Santana, Road Warriors, Billy Jack, Hayes, 1984 fan ballot.

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June 1985/COLOR PINUP: Barry Windham, Dusty Rhodes, Slaughter, Hogan, Von Erich, T.A.

July 1985/COLOR PINUP: Sgt. Slaughter, Hogan vs. Piper, Warriors, One Man Gang, T.A., Martel.

September 1985/COLOR PINUP: Junkyard Dog, Magnum T.A., Von Erich, Hogan, AWA scouting reports.

October 1985/COLOR PINUP: Chris Adams, Rick Steamboat, Warriors, Nikita, WWF scouting reports.

November 1985/COLOR PINUP: Randy Savage, Ric Flair, Slaughter, Steamboat, World Class scouting reports.

December 1985/COLOR PINUP: Jesse Ventura, Great American Bash, Von Erich, Orndorff, Williams & DiBiase.

January 1986/COLOR PINUP: Hack-saw Duggan, Hulk Hogan, T.A., Brody.

February 1986/COLOR PINUP: Nikita Koloff, Mike Von Erich, Warriors, Santana, Taylor, Barbarian, Race.

April 1986/COLOR PINUP: Ric Flair, Wendi Richter, Adams & Hernandez, Dusty & Warriors vs. Flair & Andersons.

May 1986/COLOR PINUP: Rick Steamboat, Road Warriors, Humongous, Bulldogs, Hansen vs. Martel.

June 1986/COLOR PINUP: Kevin Von Erich, Hulk Hogan, Adams, Duggan, Scott Hall.

July 1986/COLOR PINUP: King Kong Bundy, R & R Express, Hall and Hennig, Ventura, Warriors.

August 1986/COLOR PINUP: Dusty Rhodes, Randy Savage, Lugar vs. Race, Blanchard vs. Flair, Rude.

October 1986/COLOR PINUP: John Studd, Nikita Koloff, Savage vs. Bundy, Landell, Flair vs. Lugar, Simpson.

November 1986/COLOR PINUP: Baby Doll, British Bulldogs, Von Erich, Hansen, Gordy, Flair-Tully-Arn-Ole.

December 1986/COLOR PINUP: Great American Bash, Great American Bash, Midnight Rockers, Von Erich, Windham.

January 1987/COLOR PINUP: Fabulous Freebirds, Roddy Piper, Nikita vs. T.A., Snuka, Simpson.

February 1987/COLOR PINUP: Savage & Elizabeth, UWF Tournament, T.A., Baby Doll, Hogan vs. Orndorff.

April 1987/COLOR PINUP: Lex Luger, Dusty & Nikita, DiBiase, DeBeers, Dingo, WWF Housecleaning.



MAY 1987

May 1987/COLOR PINUP: Steve Williams, Andre-Hogan, UWF Tourney, Albano, Cornette, Dynamite Kid, Kerry.

June 1987/COLOR PINUP: Hulk Hogan, Magnum T.A., Can-Ams, Warriors, Freebirds, Hall.

July 1987/COLOR PINUP: Midnight Rockers, Steamboat-Savage, Luger, Duggan, Garvins, Sting.

August 1987/COLOR PINUP: Jim Garvin & Precious, Hogan-Andre, Warriors, Windham-Flair, Gordy, Bigelow.

October 1987/COLOR PINUP: Ted DiBiase, Ric Flair, Williams, Rockers, Hogan vs. Steamboat, NWA & WWF.

November 1987/COLOR PINUP: George Steele, Nikita Koloff, Warriors, Harts, Hogan, Windham.

January 1988/COLOR PINUP: The Road Warriors, Ted DiBiase, Flair-Garvins, Hogan & Ventura, Zbyszko.

February 1988/COLOR PINUP: Ronnie Garvin, Randy Savage, Garvin-Flair, Von Erichs, Freebirds.

April 1988/COLOR PINUP: Rick Martel, Lex Luger, Flair-Garvin, Kerry, Survivor Series, Iron Sheik.

May 1988/COLOR PINUP: Sting, Andre, Valentine-Beefcake, Flair, Cornette, Owen Hart.

June 1988/COLOR PINUP: Tully Blanchard, Hulk Hogan, Muraco, Perez, Rockers, Bunkhouse Stampede.

July 1988/COLOR PINUP: Curt Hennig, Hogan vs. Andre, Express vs. Rockers, Beefcake, Perez, Rotundo-Sting.

August 1988/COLOR PINUP: Al Perez, Savage & Hogan, Gilbert-Lawler, Four Horsemen, Kerry Von Erich.

October 1988/COLOR PINUP: Ultimate Warrior, Sting, Savage, Lawler, Williams, Steamboat, Varsity Club.

November 1988/COLOR PINUP: The Midnight Express, Hogan, Rhodes, Express, Powers of Pain.

December 1988/COLOR PINUP: Hack-saw Duggan, Four Horsemen, Brody, Bigelow, Garvin, Precious.

January 1989/COLOR PINUP: Barry Windham, Hogan-Savage-Elizabeth, Warriors, Sting.

February 1989/COLOR PINUP: Jake Roberts, Luger, Hogan-Savage, Kevin Von, Beefcake-Bass.

April 1989/COLOR PINUP: Rick Steiner, Savage, Dangerously, Muraco, Turner, Powers.

May 1989/COLOR PINUP: Missy Hyatt, Hogan, Ultimate, Kerry, Luger, Steamboat, 10 stars in limbo.

June 1989/COLOR PINUP: Rick Steamboat, Hogan vs. Savage, Warriors, Zbyszko, Rhodes.

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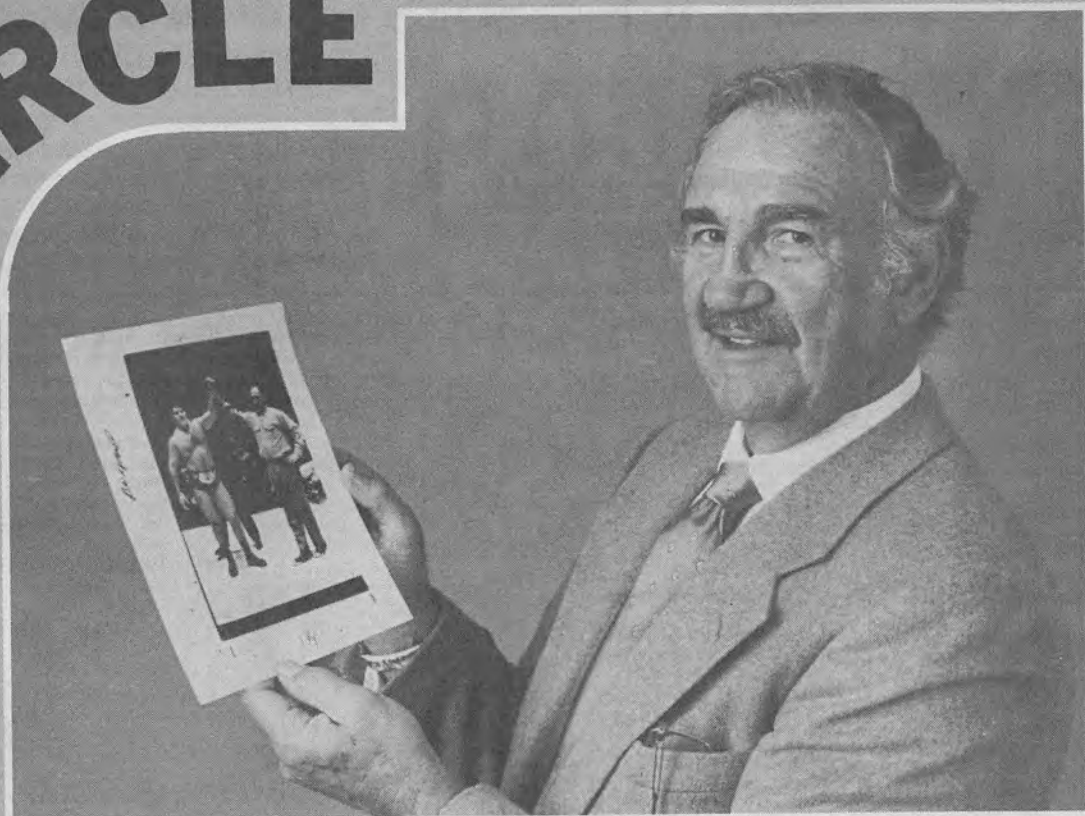
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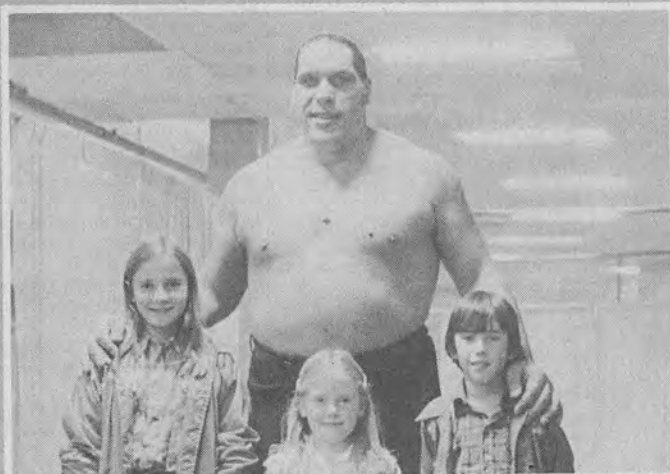
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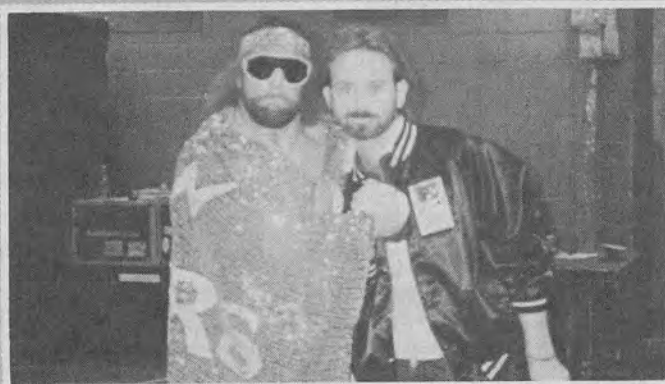
▲ Ed Gersh, manager of IBF junior middleweight boxing champion Darrin Van Horn, was the referee when Bruno Sammartino won the WWF title back in 1963.



▲ Missy Hyatt can't believe that *Wrestler* photographer Len McAllister is asking her to sweep the floor. Missy had just posed for McAllister.



▲ If you catch Andre the Giant in just the right mood, he'll be nice enough to pose for a photo. These youngsters were lucky.



▲ "Macho Man" Randy Savage accepts congratulations from Z-100 New York disc jockey Matt Alan. But that was before Savage turned against Hulk Hogan. Wonder how Matt feels now.



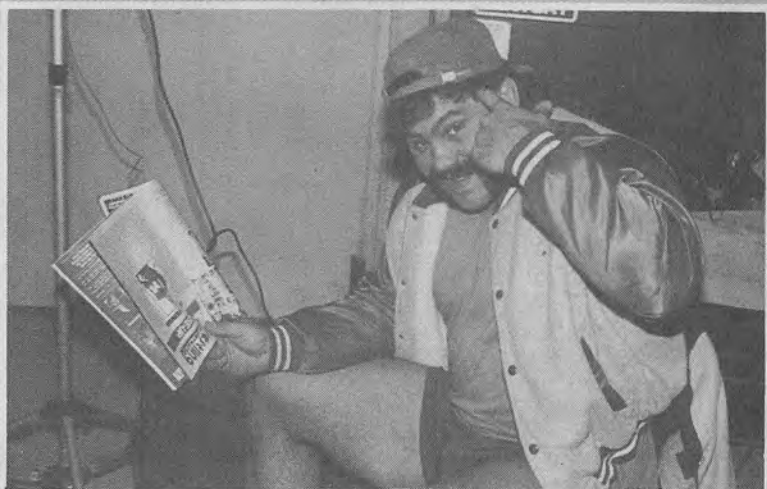
◀ Tully Blanchard shops for a watch while on vacation. Blanchard says he is a connoisseur of fine Swiss craftsmanship.



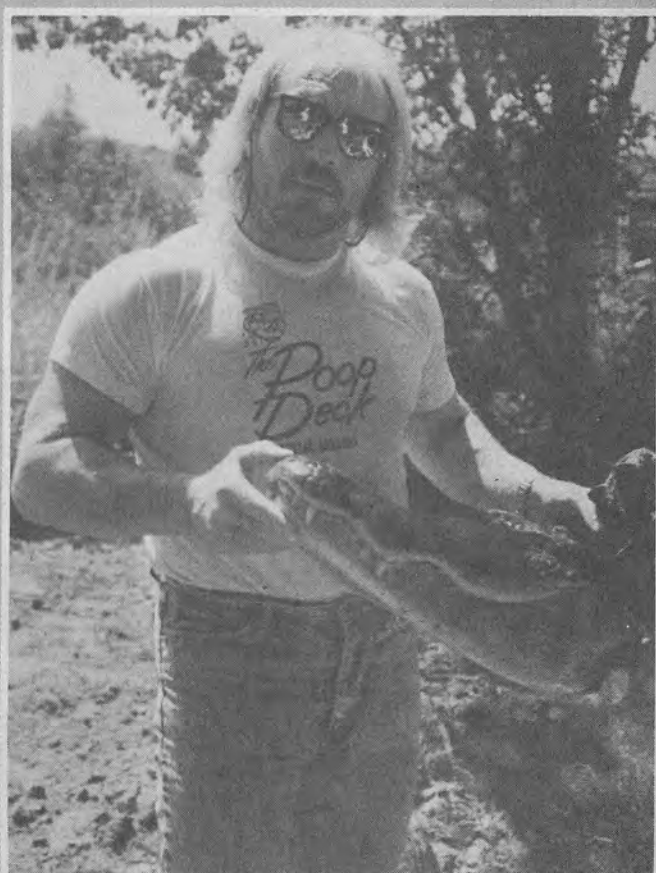
▲ Jerry Lawler is the victim of a *fishous* attack during a recent visit to the aquarium.



▲ Gorilla Monsoon and Bobby Heenan get slimed on the popular game show, *Super Sloppy Double Dare*.



▲ Steve Keirn is holding a (*yecch!*) alligator head. Keirn hunts alligators in his spare time. Seriously.



◀ Rick Steiner is wondering why we printed *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* upside down. Look again, Rick, you're holding the magazine the wrong way!

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SPECIAL ISSUE #1

For the first time ever, the March 1989 edition of *Sports Review Wrestling* presented a spectacular eight-page FULL-COLOR section—"1988: The Year In Pictures."

It was an astounding review of the year's most important matches and events, and was available only in this once-in-a-lifetime magazine.



March 1989

SPECIAL ISSUE #2

A dynamic special section in the April 1989 issue of *Inside Wrestling* offered four

pages of FULL-COLOR

coverage of: The Survivor Series, SuperClash III, Battlestar 88, and Clash of the Champions—Season's Beatings.

Plus, an in-depth analysis places all these cards in historical perspective.



April 1989

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 7)

ence an influx of Japanese stars in arenas in this country. Other managers could find it necessary to seek financial backers of their own in order to remain competitive.

In 1989, some of the sport's biggest battles may not be fought in the ring, but in board rooms and brokerage houses.

JIM BRADLEY
Jackson, NJ

LUGER'S A WIMP

In response to an item in Bill Apter's "What's Happening" in your April 1989 issue, I would like to say that Lex Luger is just crying about his loss to Ric Flair at Starrcade '88 like the wimp punk that he is.

Flair has given Luger more title shots than he deserves. Lex, you're on the bottom now, so learn to live with it. Flair has beaten your butt several times now, so it's time he defended the NWA World title against some *worthy* contenders.

Lex, you lost again. Get used to it. Long live the Horsemen!

TOMMY YARBROUGH
Morris Chapel, TN

UNWELCOME RETURN

After being embarrassed by getting pulled out the ring by William "Refrigerator" Perry during the WrestleMania II battle royal, Big John Studd left

wrestling for almost three years. Now he has returned to the WWF, and the first thing he did was insult his former manager, Bobby Heenan.

Is Studd jealous because Andre the Giant won the WWF World championship by defeating Hulk Hogan, something Studd was never able to do? Is he perturbed because Heenan wised up and signed the Giant to a contract?

Whatever the reason, it is Studd's fault for leaving Heenan in the first place. If Studd wants to settle this problem, let him get in Andre's face. The Giant will romp all over him, just like he did in their feud back in 1984.

PETE S. GRATNESS
Garfield, NJ

WELCOME BACK, BULLDOGS

If you ask me, the WWF did Canadian wrestling fans a big favor by letting The British Bulldogs get away. The article in your April 1989 issue ("You Can Go Home Again: The British Bulldogs' Triumphant Stampede Return") really spoke volumes for the fans of Stampede wrestling. Now, Davey Boy Smith and Dynamite Kid are back where they belong. They're at their best in Canada, where they will always be our favorite sons, even if they *are* from England.

It took this powerful duo no time at
(Continued on page 46)



Big John Studd stops a Ted DiBiase kick to the midsection. Reader Pete Gratness thinks that Studd will lose if he ever tangles with Andre the Giant.

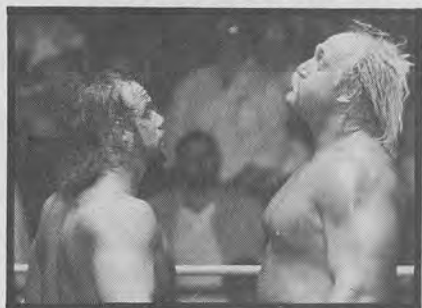
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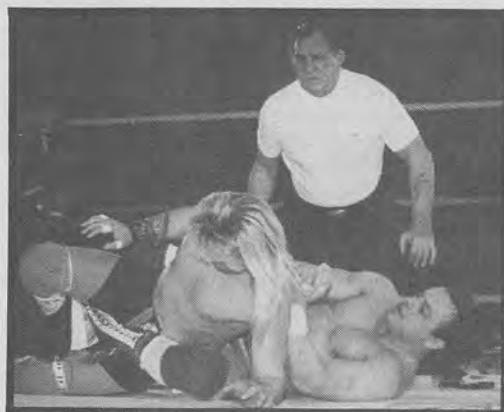
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The December 1988 edition of *The Wrestler* was a collectors' dream! It included a dynamic eight-page FULL-COLOR section featuring "The Superstars Of A Super Summer" competing in some of 1988's greatest cards and matches! Included in this exciting full-color section: Hulk Hogan, Sting, Randy Savage, Lex Luger, Rick Rude, The Ultimate Warrior, Jerry Lawler, Ric Flair, Hacksaw Duggan, The Fantastics, Dusty Rhodes, Ted DiBiase, Barry Windham, The Honky Tonk Man, and Nikita Koloff! Also included in this magnificent special issue is a full analysis of the summer's top action, plus all the regular *Wrestler* stories and features. This issue was a newsstand sellout, but we have a limited number of back issues available for the collectors' bargain price of only \$5.00 each. Don't be disappointed—order yours today!

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 44)



Dynamite Kid whips Cuban Assassin across the ring. Reader Garth Ford is glad The British Bulldogs are wrestling in the Stampede area.

all to capture the International tag team title, and they've been wiping the mat with every team they've come in contact with since then. I really don't know what the WWF promoters could have been thinking. If you look at the other teams in the federation, such as The Brain Busters, The Rockers, Jacques and Raymond Rougeau, and even the champions, Demolition, there isn't a single duo the Bulldogs couldn't beat.

The Bulldogs are so well-tuned that they could probably defeat any team in the world right now. Free of injuries and with a clear sense of purpose, they're going to powerslam their way to immortality. The WWF's loss is our gain!

GARTH FORD
Calgary, BC

THE BEST EVER?

The decade is rapidly drawing to a close, and many wrestling magazines are undoubtedly going to run polls to determine the greatest events of the decade. If this magazine does, I'd like to cast my vote right now. How could any wrestling event of the decade top the NWA's Chi-Town Rumble?

Finally, Ric Flair had the NWA title taken from him by Rick Steamboat, who is that rarest of competitors—he

backs up his words with his actions. But that match was only one of three title changes on that fantastic card. Lex Luger finally got his revenge on Barry Windham by winning the U.S. title, and Mike Rotundo regained the NWA TV championship from Rick Steiner.

Add to that The Midnight Express and Jim Cornette's total domination of Paul E. Dangerously and his team, and The Road Warriors defending their NWA World tag team title against The Varsity Club, and it all adds up to the most exciting event I've ever seen in my life.

I know some people will complain about the cost of pay-per-view events, but if they were all this thrilling, I'd gladly pay double. Here's to the NWA!

HUGH DOGHERTY
Allentown, PA □

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5. Cut down on total fat intake from animal sources and fats and oils.
6. Avoid obesity.
7. Be moderate in consumption of alcoholic beverages.

No one faces cancer alone.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 8)



Brian Pillman, about to take down Cuban Assassin with a flying bodypress, has returned to Calgary.

Sullivan, however, had a much more difficult time with Steiner on February 28 in Columbia, South Carolina. That night, Sullivan and **Steve Williams** lost their U.S. tag belts to Steiner and **Eddie Gilbert**. Sullivan tried to grab Gilbert's wife **Missy Hyatt**, who was standing near the ring, but Gilbert snuck up from behind and rolled up Sullivan for the pin.

Carlos Colon won the WWC TV title from **Jason the Terrible** in a



Moondog Spot is trying to win the Continental title from Tom Prichard.

barbed wire match on March 1 in Carolina, Puerto Rico ... Thanks to **Mike Davis** and **Masa Chono**, **Moondog Spot** has been frustrated in his attempts to win the Continental title from **Tom Prichard**. Davis and Chono have attacked Spot several times when he's been on the verge of beating Prichard ... Current WWA tag team champs **Jerry Graham Jr.** and **Don Kent** are defending their belts against **Tommy Rich** and **Chris Carter** ... "**Strangler**" **Steve DiSalvo** has left the Stampede area; his future plans are unknown. Meanwhile, **Brian Pillman** has returned and is after the vacant North American title.

Former AWA World champion **Curt Hennig** is still undefeated in the WWF, a record that's even more impressive because he's finally starting to wrestle top competition. The self-proclaimed "Mr. Perfect" has scored victories over **Brutus Beefcake**, **Terry Taylor**, and **Rick Martel** while continuing his long climb into a contender's spot for the World title. Hennig received absolutely no respect from WWF promoters when he arrived in the federation and was treated much like a rookie, wrestling in preliminary matches against unaccomplished opponents. But Hennig is now within range of a title. Can he handle **Randy Savage** or **Hulk Hogan**? That remains to be seen.

Who is the "legend" who has been training **Sgt. Slaughter** for his matches against AWA World champ **Larry Zbyszko**? Well, it's not **Bruno Sammartino**, according to Bruno himself. "I'm out of wrestling, and that includes training other guys for matches," the true "Living Legend" said. "Besides, why the heck would I be interested in who holds the doggone AWA World title? As long as that thing's held by a man like Zbysz-



Michael Hayes and Terry Gordy will both be wrestling in the NWA when Gordy returns from a tour of Japan.

zko, it's useless. Any title that can be won by Zbyszko is useless. He claims to have ended my career, but look at my record and look at his. He has nothing to brag about."

Bobby Jagers and **Black Bart** are teaming as **Southern Force** in Florida Championship Wrestling ... **Bam Bam Bigelow** is also wrestling in Florida ... Word now is that **Terry Gordy** will join the NWA in late March after his current Japan tour ... **Jimmy Garvin** is after **Nelson Royal's** Atlantic Coast junior heavyweight title ... **Cousin Luke** won the NWF Southern title with a tournament final victory over "**Gambler**" **Bob Owens** ... NWF champ **Jules Strongbow** is defending his title against **Col. DeBeers**.

Jimmy Golden and **Robert Fuller** won the World Class tag belts on February 17, then added the CWA belts to their collection on February 25 in Memphis. Golden and Fuller defeated **Kerry** and **Kevin Von Erich** by disqualification for the WCCW title after Golden had placed a foreign object in Kevin's trunks. **Jed Grundy** and **Scott Steiner** were the victims eight days later when Fuller used a kendo stick on Steiner, then scored the pin.

And that's what's happening. See you at the matches. ☐

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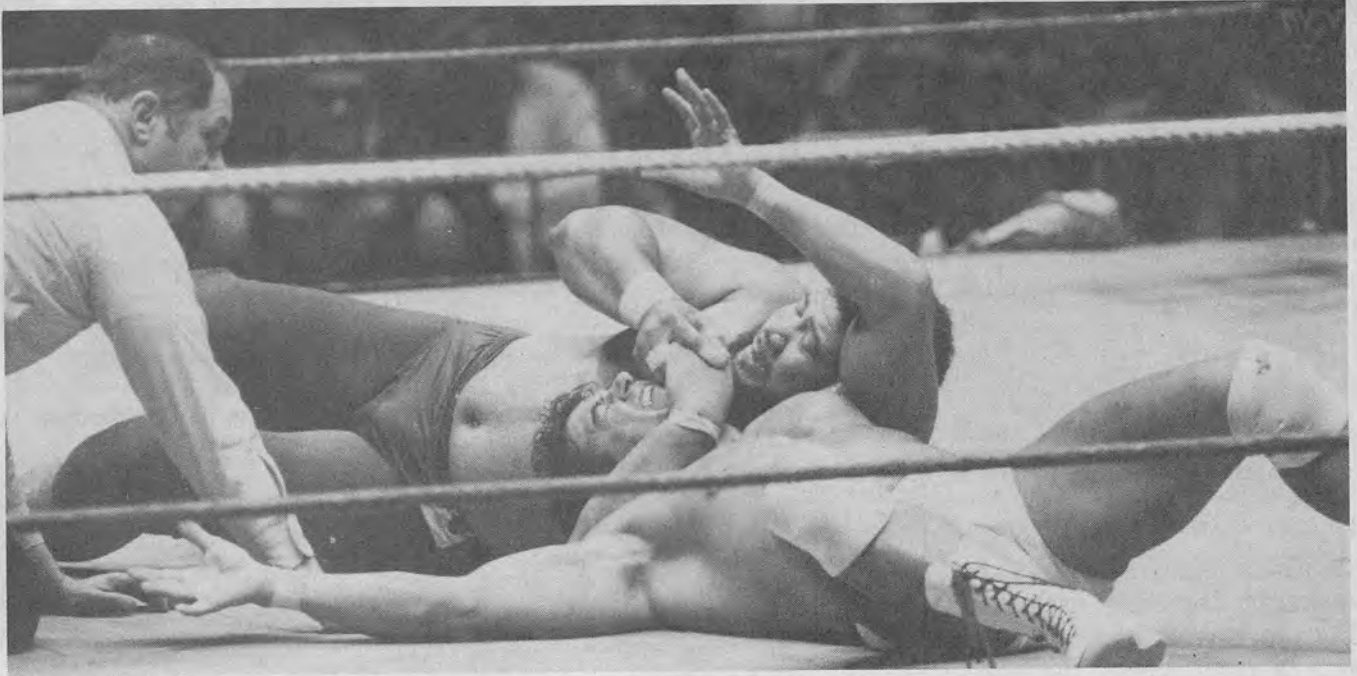
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RICK MARTEL

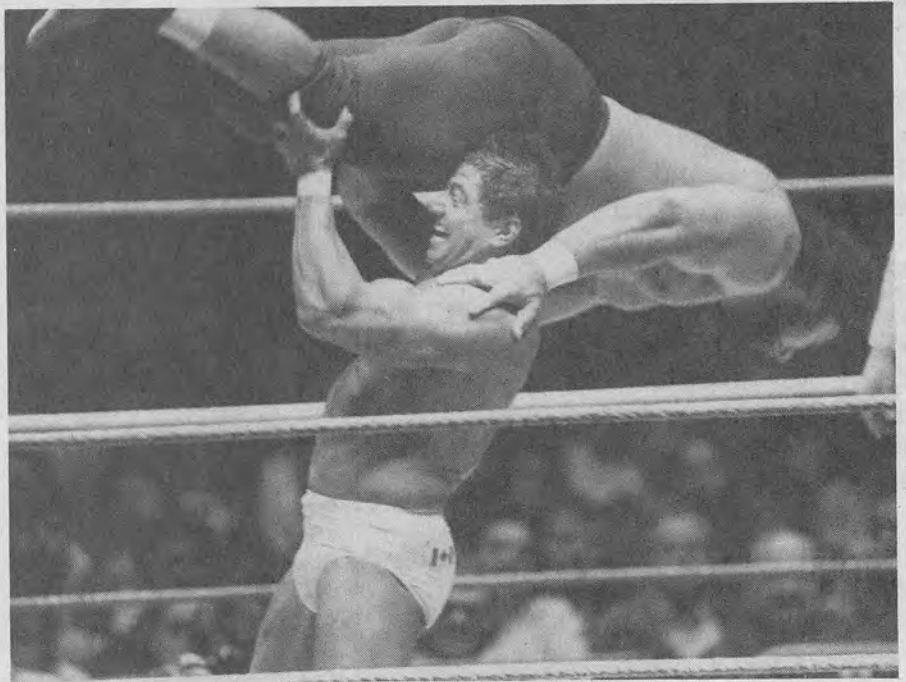
(Continued from page 31)



Haku applies a chinlock on Martel (above). Martel backdrops Haku (below). Martel suffered a serious back injury in losing the AWA title to Stan Hansen in 1985. He might not have been fully healed at the time he was hurt by Demolition last year.



Martel suplexes Haku. Those who have followed Martel's career from the beginning say he's wrestling better now and is more aggressive than he's ever been.



their victory. On March 27, 1988, at WrestleMania IV, Demolition defeated Martel and Santana for the title. That loss, however, paled in comparison to the next hardship about to befall Martel.

During a rematch on June 1 in Oakland, California, Martel suffered an injury against Demolition that made the one he suffered

against Hansen look minor by comparison. As Smash draped Martel's body in a backbreaker position, Ax delivered an elbow-smash from the ring apron in a deadly variation of their "decapitation" maneuver—but this time he delivered it from the ring apron to the ringside floor. The force of the blow made Martel's limp body

spin through the air before he finally landed awkwardly on his back.

Doctors warned Martel that returning to the ring could imperil his health, but Martel refused to listen. He immediately began extensive therapy for his injuries. After that was complete, he began rebuilding his body.

"I didn't think Martel had a prayer of coming back—ever," said Dr. Stanley Nimphius, one of California's top sports medicine experts and surgeons. "First, Hansen wrecked the lower lumbar region of Martel's back. Then, Ax did a number again on that area, plus to the fragile vertebrae in the back of his neck. That's more suffering than any man should endure."

Apparently, Martel's tolerance to pain is extremely high. When he returned to the WWF at the Royal Rumble on January 15, fans were astonished. Even during his AWA championship years, Martel had never been in such fine condition. His muscles bulged with power, and his aerial maneuvers were precise and effective. It was hard to believe Martel had been out of action for months.

Since then, Martel has been a man on a mission, taking on one of the most ambitious schedules of his career. He's wrestled extremely well against top contenders such as King Haku, and he's even reformed his tag team with Tito Santana. But just performing well isn't good enough for Martel.

"Martel has never been this aggressive," said Pilliard. "He wants to eradicate any memory of him screaming in pain at the hands of Hansen and Demolition. You can tell by looking at him that he's determined to stay healthy, win another championship, and become one of the sport's elite superstars once again."

Sometimes, unfortunately, fate interferes with man's best-laid plans. □

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WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW

(Continued from page 10)



Long officiates the Chi-Town Rumble TV title match between Rick Steiner and Mike Rotundo. He would like to reach the level of respect accorded refs like Tommy Young.

changed hands, then it was for real. Hopefully, I'll have that kind of respect soon."

If fans don't quite respect Long yet, most wrestlers do. "You always know where you stand with Teddy," says Lex Luger. "He's tough, but fair. He very rarely makes a mistake, and when he does, he'll admit it after the match—man to man. I appreciate that."

"Yeah. Teddy. He's a good guy," Rick Steiner said. "He's my friend. Uh, no, we can't be friends with the referees, right? Okay, so, well, he's a good guy, anyway. Alex likes him, too."

But not every wrestler has a good word for Long.

"Me and Kevin Sullivan would

be World champions now instead of The Road Warriors if it hadn't been for Long," Steve Williams said. "I had Animal cleanly pinned at the Chi-Town Rumble, but Long made the count on Kevin instead. He's a cheap crook like all the rest of 'em. He robbed The Varsity Club, and we're not gonna forget it. The next time we fight the Warriors, we're gonna ask for another ref!"

"Mr. Teddy Long, let me give you a fair warning!" Sullivan intoned. "Eventually, The Varsity Club settles all its accounts. Our priorities start with The Road Warriors. After that, there is a certain referee we must deal with. Do I make myself clear, Mr. Long? Do you catch my meaning?"

"There are always gonna be guys like Sullivan and Williams who don't like what I'm doing, but that's part of the job," Long said. "I can't afford to worry about them. In fact, if they think I'm doing a bad job, that means I'm doing all right."

"We're very pleased with the way Teddy has developed," said NWA President Jim Crockett. "We use him for the big matches because we're confident he'll do an outstanding job. Tommy Young is, of course, still our number-one official, but Teddy is a solid number two. We're hoping he'll stay in the NWA for a long time to come."

"I'm pleased Jim feels that way," Long said. "I agree with Jim that Tommy's at the top of the list, but I believe I can reach that level some day, too. I think I've accomplished a lot in the past five years, but I'm not satisfied yet." □

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LARRY ZBYSZKO

(Continued from page 33)

other guys. I wasn't even a favorite, because I had just returned to the AWA. And I won! You mutant spudheads better start to respect me, or else I'm going to make life very hard on *everybody* around here."

Nine years ago, Zbyszko was one of the most respected scientific competitors in the sport. He shocked the wrestling community by turning against the man who trained him, Bruno Sammartino. Since then, he has become increasingly paranoid and defensive. Many anticipated that when

Gary Hart, Zbyszko's former manager in the NWA, has surprisingly expressed concern over his former protege's demeanor. Hart managed the Pittsburgh native for eight months during 1988 but claims that his relationship with Zbyszko was nagged by internal problems.

"Larry was hard to figure," recalled Hart. "He won the Western States title in January of last year; sometimes he would defend it, and sometimes he wouldn't. Then, I formed a fantastic tag team with Larry and the great Al Perez, but then Larry would disappear. When he decided to come back, he seemed anxious to defend his title and tag with Al, and he did—but then he would go into his act again. It was exasperating, but he was such a great talent that I put up with it."

Zbyszko admits he went through mood swings in the NWA, but he insists it was the promoters—and NWA champion

Ric Flair—that were driving him to the point of frustration.

"Here I was, the Western States champion, but I got no matches against the World champ," said a bitter Zbyszko. "I beat Barry Windham for that Western States belt, but as far as prestige goes, it did me no good at all. Hart supposedly got me some title matches in January, but by then I was fed up. I told the NWA they could take the Western States belt and shove it."

After months of indecision, Zbyszko returned to the AWA. He won the championship battle royal in one of his first return appearances. Now, he's got the ammunition he's always wanted to *force* people to give him the respect he claims he deserves—and he's not going to let anyone forget it for a minute.

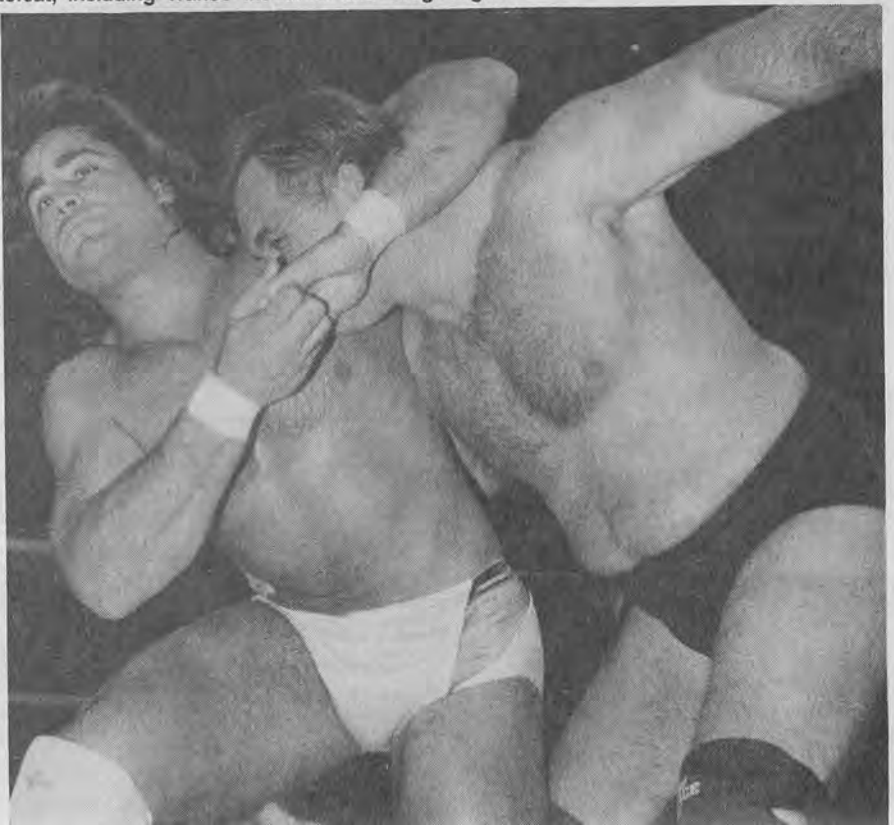
"The morons who run the AWA better wise up," bellowed Zbyszko. "This title is the culmination of 14 glorious years in this sport."

Zbyszko executes a backbreaker on Zenk (left). Zenk puts Zbyszko in a side headlock (below). Now that he's won the World title, Zbyszko has targeted several veterans for defeat, including Wahoo McDaniel and Greg Gagne.



he won the title he might calm down a bit. Instead, his newfound notoriety has made him even more manic than ever!

"This guy is really unbalanced," said Brad Rheingans, who is striving to be one of the top contenders to Zbyszko's title. "He was always quick to insult everybody and everything, but now that he's won the title, he's gotten even worse. He's really starting to think he's the best wrestler in the world. Granted, he's always been talented, but the *best*? It's going to take more than a battle royal for him to convince people that he's the finest in this sport."



This is the result of hard work mixed with supreme talent. Now I'm calling the shots. I pick the contenders and the venues. From now on I am the man, and everybody has to answer to me."

What riles the new champion more than anything else, however, is the way the fans have treated him since his AWA return. Zbyszko's threatening to take his anger toward the fans out on his opponents.

"Keep yelling 'Larry sucks,' you rubes," he warned. "Every time I hear it, it'll be good for one more scar on McDaniel's decrepit forehead. Or maybe it'll force me to break little Greg Gagne's knee or arm. I'm gonna get the respect



A man who enjoys the good life, Zbyszko wants to make life bad for his opponents. Being champion has made the "Living Legend" more arrogant than ever before.

and the quality treatment I deserve, or I'll turn the AWA into my private torture chamber—and that goes for Sgt. Slaughter, Rheingans, the Guerreros, Zenk, and all the rest of 'em. I repeat: Respect me—or pay the price."

Before winning the AWA title, Zbyszko's greatest boast was that he was the man who retired both Sammartino and Nick Bockwinkel. Now, as champion, he's looking for more big names to demolish.

Given his current state of mind, it would be unwise to take him lightly. ☐

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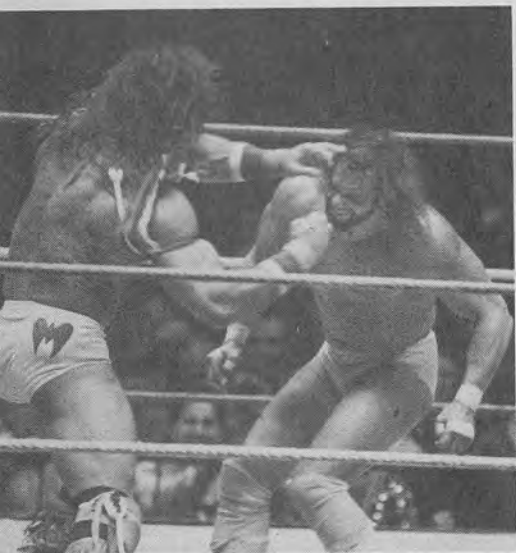
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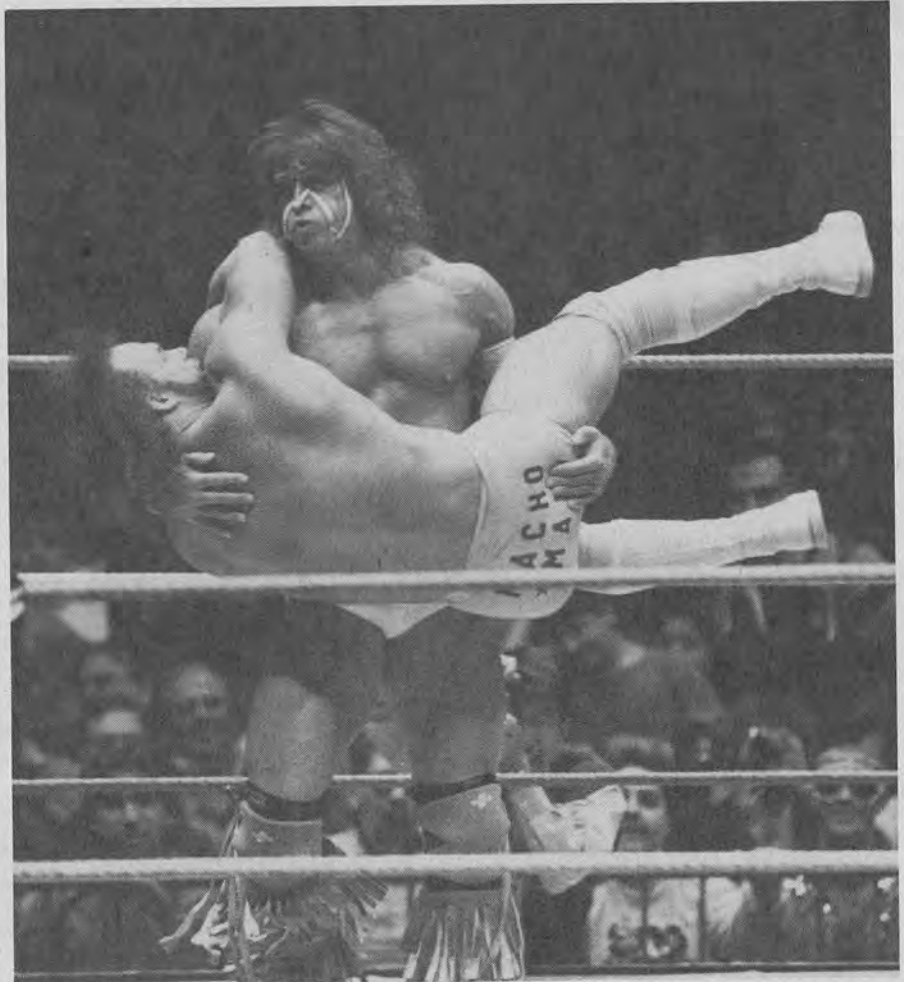
Savage clotheslines the Warrior, who wants to win both major titles in the WWF.



In a display of ferocity, Warrior throws the "Macho Man" back into the ring.



Warrior slugs Savage, a powerful man, but no match for the Warrior's strength.



The Warrior sets up "Macho Man" for a backbreaker. Ultimate and Hogan have developed a close friendship outside the ring over the past year, making Ultimate very aware of Hogan's intense feelings about Savage.

cause he was someone he could train with," said Don Muraco, who worked out with both men during his WWF years. "There aren't many men who can keep up with Hogan, lift for lift, when he's working out with the heavy weights. Suddenly, there was this massive kid around who could keep up with Hogan and push him. Naturally they became pretty close after that."

As the months progressed, Hogan and the Warrior worked out together as often as possible. As their bond grew stronger, so did the Warrior—so much stronger that, at SummerSlam 88 last August, the Warrior defeated The Honky Tonk Man in only 31 seconds to become the Intercontinen-

tal champion. In the locker room following the victory, it would be Hogan who would pour the first bottle of champagne over the new champion's head.

Then came the explosion heard around the world. On February 3 in Milwaukee, Savage turned against Hogan in a flurry of rage and jealousy. After this nationally televised incident, Savage became the most hated man in wrestling—and the biggest enemy of Hogan's career.

Surprisingly, in the weeks that followed the Hogan-Savage split, the Warrior was scheduled to take on Savage in matches at arenas across the country. At about that same time, the Warrior and Hogan became closer than ever.

Almost nobody—especially Savage—was prepared for the raw ferocity displayed by the Warrior during these matches. It appeared as if the Warrior had reached an agreement with Hogan to rid wrestling of Savage before Hogan's WrestleMania V main event against Savage would even take place. But the Warrior also wanted to prove his worth as a true championship contender.

On February 20 in Madison Square Garden in New York, the Warrior was at the top of his game for a non-title confrontation. Savage, a skilled scientific talent, couldn't figure out how to control his massive opponent. At one point, the Warrior threw Savage out of the ring to the arena floor. The champion tried to scurry away, but before he could, the Warrior lifted him over his head and threw him between the ropes and back into the ring.

Although he dominated the match, the Warrior did not consider Savage's devious ally. As the Warrior had Savage in peril of being pinned, Rick Rude came to ringside and flexed his muscles in an obvious attempt to distract the Warrior. The ploy worked, as the Warrior left the ring to battle Rude. After 10 seconds, Savage was declared the winner by countout.

The Warrior did a remarkable job in battling Savage, but nobody was counting on Savage's sudden alliance with Rude and other WWF rulebreakers. It was as if Savage knew all along that the Warrior may have been serving as Hogan's proxy.

Despite the mass and power of The Ultimate Warrior, Savage, as usual, emerged as the victor. His actions were a clear message to Hogan and anyone else the former champion might send up against him:

If you're going to beat me, Hogan, you're going to have to do it yourself.

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INTRODUCING

(Continued from page 20)

wouldn't let me. I was kicked out because I was doing all the pro moves. They were teaching us the basic stuff and I was doing bodyslams and suplexes."

And although Dukes couldn't wrestle in high school, the desire to compete in the ring never left him. He graduated from Barberton High School in 1982 and was supposed to attend Columbus Tech and play basketball. But once again, he found the attraction of the ring to be too strong. He enrolled in Brad Rheingans' World Wide School of Professional Wrestling in Minneapolis and needed only six weeks to prepare himself for the pros.

"Eddie Sharkey, one of The Terminators, and sometimes Brad

taught me," Dukes said. "But they just teach you the basics. You have to create the other stuff in your own mind. I tried to think of new moves I've never seen before, quick, high-flying moves that would be effective and the fans would find exciting. I like to do the aerial stuff and I try to mix my strength with my speed."

He made his pro debut in Winnipeg, Canada, in July 1986, and three years later is happy he became a pro.

"I have no regrets," Dukes said. "I'm glad I did it, because it's something I've always wanted to do. You know, when I step into that ring and hear the crowd cheering, it makes it all worth it. I'm always pumped up to wrestle,

but the crowd cheering pumps me up even more."

The fact that Dukes has rapidly become a favorite among the female fans hasn't hurt matters. His outgoing personality and impressive physique make him a top contender for the title of wrestling's sexiest superstar of the 1990s. And while he enjoys the fans' attention, Dukes insists that he'd rather make an impression in the ring.

"Me and Ricky's goal is to win the World tag team championship from Bad Company," Dukes said. "Right now, it's my own goal. Eventually, down the line, I guess I'd like to win an individual world title, but that's all in the future. Right now, I'm only worried about the present."

Rice and Dukes have been together for most of their careers. "He was finishing camp just as I was coming in," Dukes said. "His partner got hurt and I had to take his partner's place, and except for last year when I went on a tour of Europe and Ricky teamed with John Paul, it's been him and I ever since."

That tour of Europe, which included stops in Germany, Austria, Italy, Denmark, and Switzerland, was one of the highlights of Dukes' short career. "I teamed with Tom Zenk and that's where I learned the most," Dukes said. "Ricky was in the AWA then, and he was supposed to go but couldn't. It was a great learning experience, though, teaming with a guy like Tom."

And Dukes admits that he still has a lot to learn.

"Listen, I'm still pretty new to this, but I had a head start and I've been watching wrestling for a long time," he said. "It takes a lot to trick me. But even if I don't become world famous, I'm where I've always wanted to be." □



Dukes leaps off the ropes to elbowsmash Wayne Bloom, who's being held by Rice. The Top Guns are number-one contenders to Bad Company's AWA World tag team title.

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December 1982/Backlund-Rose, Rhodes-Flair, Albano, Humpdink.

January 1983/Rich, McDaniel-Valentine, Patera, Brisco, Bockwinkel.

February 1983/Flair-Race, Morales-Rose, Patera, Bravo, Spoiler.

March 1983/Flair-Bass, Snuka, Sullivan, Steamboat, Patera.

April 1983/Backlund-Graham, Briscos, Rhodes, Hogan, Samoans.

May 1983/Muraco, Dillon, Sullivan, Reed, Brisco, Von Erich.

June 1983/Piper, Bockwinkel-Patterson, Brody, Sullivan, Baba.

July 1983/Valiant-Humpdink, Martel, Hernandez, Murdoch, Armstrong.

October 1983/Martel-Valentine, Mulligan, Lawler, Von Erichs, Bruno.

November 1983/Andre-Mulligan, Kamala-Brody, Slater, Backlund.

December 1983/Windham-LeDuc, Santana, Sullivan, Garvin.

January 1984/Andre-Abdullah, Bockwinkel, Gilbert, Windham, Flair, Mosca.

February 1984/Rich-Sawyer, Idol-Hansen, Martel, Parsons, Von Erich.

March 1984/Starrcade '83, Closeups on Atlanta and Dallas cards.

April 1984/Von Erich-Gordy, Dillon & Nagasaki, Graham, DiBiase, Orndorff.

May 1984/LeDuc-Sawyer, Assessins, The Men Who Make Wrestling Fly!

June 1984/Windham-Flair, Gilbert, Sawyer, Bockwinkel, Tsuruta.

July 1984/Flair-Gordy, Duggan, Blanchard, Brisco, AWA tag tourney.

August 1984/Rich & Gilbert, Adams-Hayes, Von Erich, Faces Of Wrestling.

September 1984/Flair-Steamboat, Freebirds-Von Erichs—Special coverage of two big cards.

October 1984/Sullivan-Rhodes, Freebirds video, Atlas, Orange Bowl card.

November 1984/Von Erich & Billy Jack, Andre, Fab Ones, Summer Wars!

December 1984/Rich-Gilbert, Martel, Mascaras, Youngblood, World Class.

January 1985/Flair-McDaniel, Missing Link, Backlund, Fabulous Ones, Pro Wrestling USA, Valentine.

February 1985/Sullivan-Graham, Hernandez & Nicola Roberts, Bruno Jr., Steamboat, Warriors.

March 1985/Starrcade '84 featuring Flair, Rhodes, Steamboat, Koloffs, 1985 Datebook, Hayes, wrestling school.

April 1985/Von Erich-Blackwell, Haynes-Barr, Hart, Irwins, 1984 in Pictures, Blair.

May 1985/Albano, Freebirds-Flair, Steamboat, Hernandez, Las Vegas.

June 1985/Pro Wrestling U.S.A., Von Erich, Richter, Windham, Taylor.

July 1985/Von Erich, WrestleMania, bloodiest matches, Backlund, Snuka.

August 1985/Flair-Nikita, Orndorff, Slaughter, Parade of Champions II.

September 1985/Adams-Von Erich, Orndorff, Sawyer, Kamala, Barr.

October 1985/Martel-Hayes, Richter, Savage, Adams, T.A., Warriors.

November 1985/Freebirds-Warriors, Mid-South, Haynes, Rhodes, Savage.

December 1985/Hogan, Zbyszko-Martel, Murdoch, Dillon, fiendish faces.

January 1986/Savage-Santana, Abdullah, Humongous, Von Raschke, Comiskey Park, Taylor.

February 1986/Junkyard Dog, Rude, Patrick, Garvin, Reed, Datebook.

March 1986/Starrcade '85, Ventura, Windham, Sunshine, Slaughter.

April 1986/Savage-Hogan, Martel-Hansen, 1985 in Pictures, Warriors, DiBiase.

May 1986/Sammartino, R&R Express, Sunshine-Hyatt, Slater, Devastating Holds, Hall & Hennig.

June 1986/Hogan-Muraco, Midnight Express, Freebirds, Battle of Belts II.

July 1986/Orndorff-Piper, Blanchard-T.A., Matches of '80s, Shepherders, Bockwinkel, Bulldogs.

August 1986/Crockett Cup Tourney, Jake Roberts, Midnight Rockers, Von Erichs, Wrestling II.

September 1986/Bulldogs, Blanchard-Gibson, Luger, Dundee, UWF tourney.

October 1986/Orndorff, Rude-Brody, Bash, Bockwinkel, Gordy, Adams.

November 1986/Andersons-R&R Express, Machine, Gordy, Managers.

December 1986/Machines, Fantastics, Warriors, WWF Muchnick Tourney.

January 1987/Russians, Hyatt-Dark Journey, WWF Top 50, Fab Ones.

February 1987/Road Warriors, Savage, Windham & Luger, 1987 Datebook.

March 1987/Kamala-Hogan, Starrcade '86, Atlas, Williams, Tatum.

April 1987/1986 in Pictures, Kevin Von Flair, Rich, Hennig-Bockwinkel.

May 1987/Nikita-Flair, Bulldogs, Albano's career, Snuka-DeBeers, Taylor.

June 1987/Hogan-Andre, Hall, Parsons, Garvin, WWF title history.

July 1987/Midnight Express, Savage-Steamboat, Adams, NWA in Boston.

August 1987/Nord-Kevin, Armstrong-Flair, Hogan & Patera, Crockett Cup.

September 1987/Hogan, Akbar, Luger-Nikita, Summer Feuds, charity shows.

October 1987/Windham, Bigelow, Bockwinkel, Western States tourney.

November 1987/Bash, Honky Tonk, Hart, Shepherders, Condrey.

December 1987/Grappling Ghouls, Hogan-Andre, Luger-Nikita, Boesch card.

January 1988/Honky Tonk, Garvin, T.A. career, Arcidi, Hogan.

February 1988/Rhodes, Strike Force, Rich-Adonis, Hyatt, 1988 datebook.

March 1988/Starrcade, Survivor Series, Simpson, Hennig, Zbyszko.

April 1988/1987 in Pictures, Tully & Arn, DiBiase, Kerry, Orton.

May 1988/Hawk-Flair, Andre-Hogan, Dangerously, Duggan, Mike George.

June 1988/Luger-Tully, DiBiase, Adams, NWA New York invasion.

July 1988/Savage wins WWF tourney, Rockers-Express, Hayes, Dusty-Rider.

August 1988/Luger and Sting win Crockett Cup, Savage-DiBiase, Nasty Boys, Ultimate Warrior.

September 1988/Predictions Through 1988, Williams, Rhodes, Bad Company, greatest Garden matches.

October 1988/Midnight Rockers, Sting, Taylor, Koloff, Hot Young Lions.

November 1988/R&R Express, Honky Tonk, Von Erichs, Great American Bash.

December 1988/Warriors, Samoan SWAT Team, Hart, Andre, Presidential Wrestlers.

January 1989/Jake-Cheryl-Rude, Sting, Lawler, Flair, Savage's career.

February 1989/The Champions in '89, Duggan, Roberts, 1989 datebook.

April 1989/Starrcade '88, Savage-Hogan, Funk-Mulligan, Heenan, Abdullah.

May 1989/Royal Rumble, WrestleMania, Rhodes, Lawler, Horsemen.

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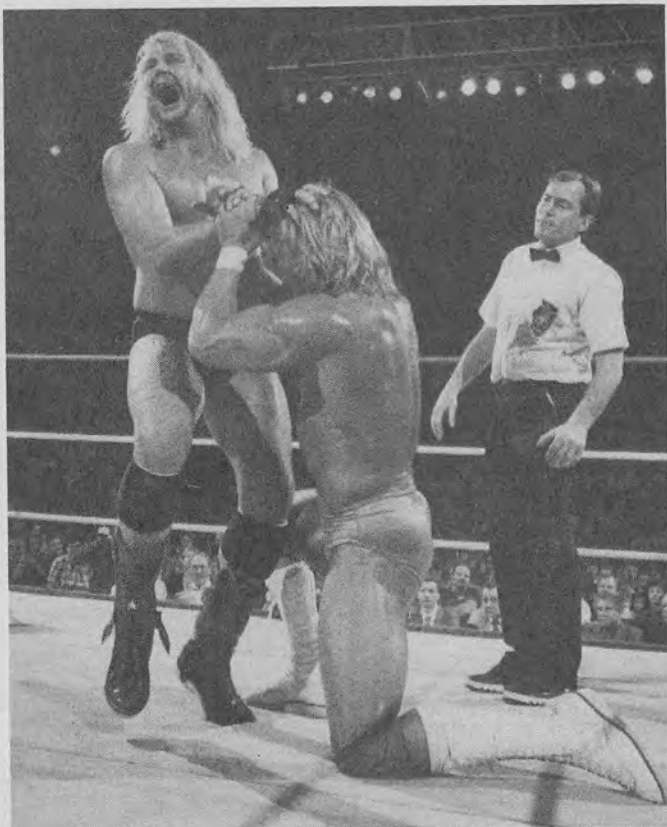
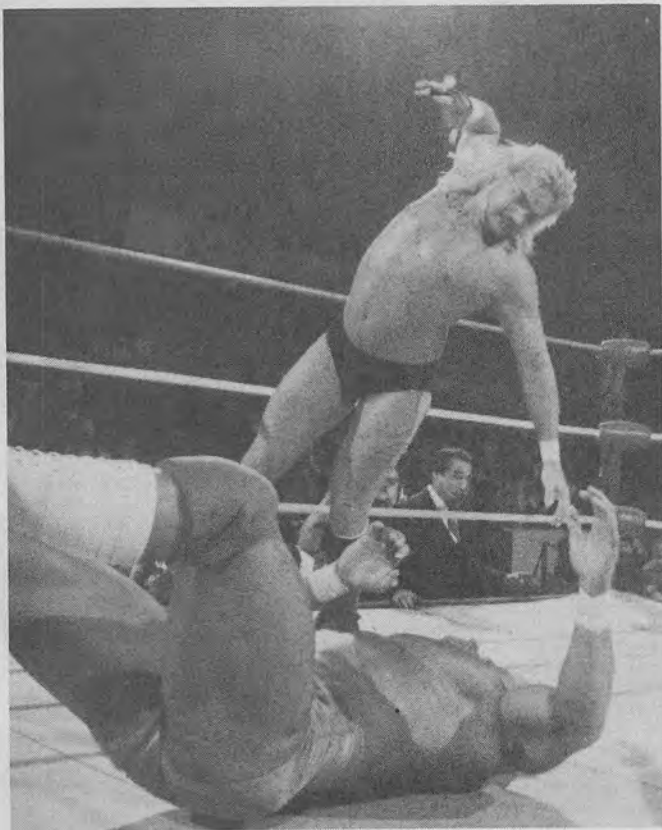
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LEX LUGER

(Continued from page 37)

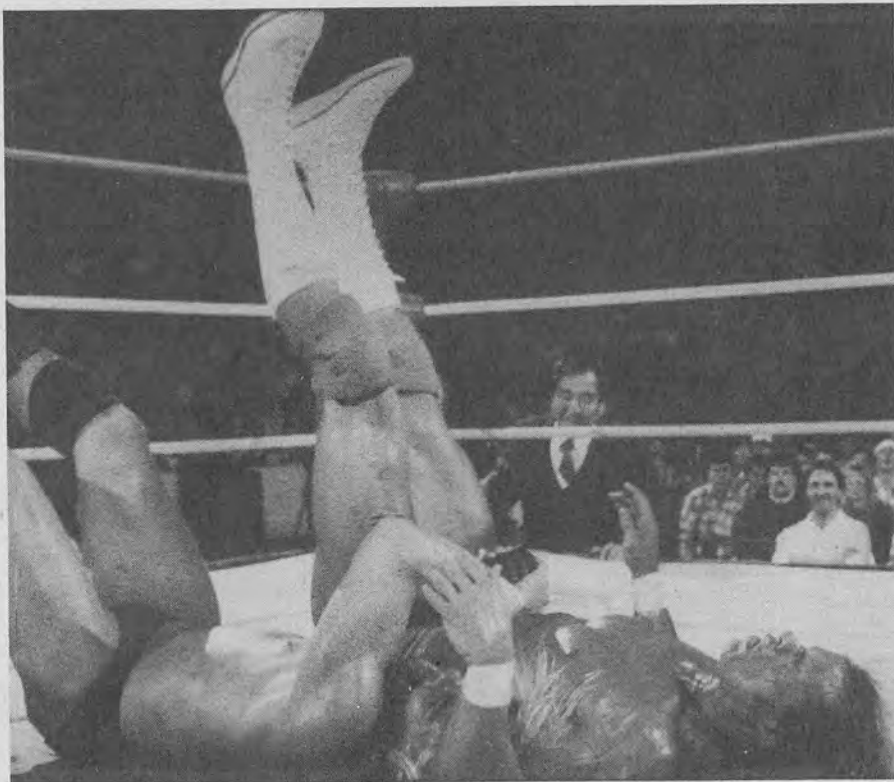


Windham prepares to slap the claw on Luger (above left) and digs it in hard (above right). Windham's belly-to-back suplex was designed to pin Luger, but he ended up pinning himself (below). Sting never gave up on his friend, even after he failed to win the World title.

did it just *before* the three-count, right *at* the three-count, or maybe a fraction of a second *after*. For me, with a video replay, it was too close to call. But the way Windham acted afterwards made the decision proper, he *deserved* to lose.

Of course, if you had seen the look on Lex's face when he got back to the dressing room, you would have known, like I did, that all the punishment was worth it. I think I know *exactly* how Lex felt. I'd go through any kind of punishment necessary to win a major singles title. That's what we're all here for. I'm sure one day, and hopefully very soon, I'll have that experience.

I know one thing: It doesn't come easy. For one, Lex really had to pick himself up after Flair said he'd never wrestle him for the title again. All of a sudden, Lex had to change his frame of mind. You know, Lex and I spent many nights just talking about our



career goals, deciding what direction we should go in. After a while, Lex realized he was young, Flair isn't always going to be

champion (you know *that's* right, now, too!), and life must go on. So when the chance to sign for a match against Windham was of-

ferred, Lex grabbed it.

Though this was a very big match, a chance for Lex to get back on the right track, I have to reveal that he didn't go through any special training for it. Lex always keeps himself in great shape, and he's been doing a lot of aerobics over the past year to improve his stamina. Really, you can't do any more than Lex does without simply overdoing it. I consider myself to be in good shape, but when we work out together it's a struggle to keep up.

The one thing I *did* notice different about Lex this time was the look in his eyes. As I said, he didn't work out differently; he was just more intense. What we did do was discuss Windham's strengths and weaknesses, ways to go after him, and what to avoid. We learned a lot from each other.

On the night of February 20, I was on early in the card. So after my match against Butch Reed, I ran back to the dressing room to help Lex get ready. I sat down with him and we discussed the match again. He was worried that Hiro Matsuda, Windham's new manager, might interfere. I told him not to worry about Matsuda, just Windham.

And that was about it. Lex did some final stretching exercises, and when the call came that it was his turn to wrestle, I've never seen Lex get more psyched. Of course, *nothing* could have prepared him for what happened in the ring. Lex hurt his forehead early, and Windham had control for the rest of the match. Then Windham hurt his hand; that, really, was the turning point. There's no way anybody at half-strength is going to beat Lex.

Here's what I think it all came down to: Lex wanted it more. There was no way in hell he was going to let Windham pin him. It was intense!

Now my friend is going to bring that intensity to the U.S. title! ☐

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SPRING 1987



FALL 1988

SPRING 1984/Color pinups: Superstar-Bravo, Adrian Street, Hansen-Race, Valiant-Kabuki. **Stories include:** Warriors, Kerry Von Erich, Bockwinkel, Santana, Hansen.

SUMMER 1984/Color pinups: Patera-Gagne, Windham-Bart, Bundy-Garvin, Koloff-Mosca. **Stories include:** Junkyard Dog, Flair-Race, Adams-Garvin, Snuka, Idol, Orndorff.

FALL 1984/Color pinups: Haynes-Nagasaki, Kabuki-Kamala, Steamboat-Slater, Blanchard-Colon. **Stories include:** Hogan, David Von Erich, Flair-Brody, Blanchard.

WINTER 1984/Color pinups: Michael Hayes, Flair-McDaniel, Gilbert-Rich, Haynes-Funk. **Stories include:** Kerry Von Erich, Martel-Bockwinkel, Piper, Flair-Steamboat.

SPRING 1985/Color pinups: Animal-Funk, Poffo-Gilbert, Nikita-Fernandez, Garvin-McDaniel. **Stories include:** Warriors, Hogan, Albano, Rhodes, Sullivan.

SUMMER 1985/Color pinups: Kerry-Flair, Hawk-Lawler, Funk-Slater, Nikita-Rhodes. **Stories include:** Valentine, Windham & Rotundo, Warriors, Flair-Race, Nikita.

FALL 1985/Color pinups: Adams-Kevin Von Erich, Zbyszko-Backlund, Lawler-Brody, Blanchard-T.A. **Stories include:** Von Erichs, Warriors, Hogan-Volkoff, Freebirds.

WINTER 1985/Color pinups: Flair-Kevin Von Erich, Hayes-Hawk, Hogan-Fujinami, DiBiase-Roberts. **Stories include:** Orndorff, Warriors, Brody, Shultz, Duggan.

SPRING 1986/Color pinups: Windham-Sullivan, Andre-Bundy, Taylor-Landell, Hernandez-Kerry. **Stories include:** R&R Express, Warriors, Hogan, Santana, Rude, Williams.

SUMMER 1986/Color pinups: Luger-Barr, Garvin-Flair, Nord-Hawk, Missy-Sunshine. **Stories include:** Warriors-Rusians, Savage-Hogan, Kevin Von Erich, Bulldogs.

FALL 1986/Color pinups: Kirchner-Volkoff, Nikita-Hawk, Morton-Flair, Nord-Hennig. **Stories include:** R&R Express, Luger, Savage, Bulldogs, Hansen, Rude, Williams.

WINTER 1986/Color pinups: Rude-Von Erich, Khru-shchev-Mantel, Hogan-Adonis, Bockwinkel-DeBeers. **Stories include:** Supercards, Hogan, Horsemen, Snuka, Von Erich.

SPRING 1987/Color pinups: Steamboat-Zulu, Roberts-Hillbilly, Morton-Anderson, DiBiase-Hayes. **Stories include:** Bigelow, Flair, Hogan, Luger, Race, Windham, Hyatt.

SUMMER 1987/Color pinups: Roberts-Kamala, Von Erich-Perez, Morton-Koloff, Snuka-Zukhov. **Stories include:** Windham, Elizabeth, Superpowers, Albano, Von Erich.

FALL 1987/Color pinups: Animal-Lane, Bigelow-Inoki, Sullivan-Hall, Ware-Honky Tonk. **Stories include:** Midnights, Flair, Steamboat-Savage, Luger, Piper, Hogan-Andre.

WINTER 1987/Color pinups: Tama-Santana, Perez-Steamboat, Rhodes-Flair, Gordy-Gilbert. **Stories include:** Luger-Nikita, Express, Hart, Hogan, Hyatt, Lawler.

SPRING 1988/Color pinups: Jason-Hart, Konga-Sting, OMG-Santana, Von Erich-Adias. **Stories include:** Warriors, Hogan-Andre, DiBiase, Honky Tonk, T.A., War Games.

SUMMER 1988/Color pinups: Von Erich-Roberts, Sting-Rotundo, Misty-Dallas, Reed-Muraco. **Stories include:** Luger, Hogan, Comette, Hennig, Bigelow, Hyatt, Rude.

FALL 1988/Color pinups: Santana-Smash, Warlord-Hawk, Adams-Taylor, Hennig-Lawler. **Stories include:** Luger, Hogan, DiBiase, Kerry & Hayes, Sting, Savage.

WINTER 1988/Color pinups: Kerry, Hayes, OMG, Sting, Luger, Idol, Ultimate, Brody. **Stories include:** Sting, Hyatt, Dusty, Roberts, Ultimate, Powers of Pain.

SPRING 1989/Color pinups: Slaughter, Sheik, Andre, Savage, Flair, Steiner, Madusa, Richter. **Stories include:** Savage, Bossman, Sting, Lawler, Hogan, Luger.

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CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 16)

He leapt and squarely hit the Warrior's skull with a flying axhandle. Warrior fell and dropped Rude to the floor. Savage rolled back into the ring and was declared the winner by countout.

In other bouts: Akeem and John Studd were both counted out ... Sam Houston pinned Barry Horowitz ... Boris Zukhov pinned Tim Horner ... Ron Bass pinned Koko B. Ware ... Rick Rude pinned Tito Santana ... Arn Anderson & Tully Blanchard beat The Rockers.

Prince George, British Columbia (Correspondent—Faron Muncy): Stampede Wrestling made a rare appearance in Prince George as The British Bulldogs squared off against Stampede International tag team champions Makhan and Vulkan Singh.

The fans were slightly disappointed at the beginning of the match when the Singhs announced that they were not going to put the belts on the line because the Bulldogs did not deserve a title shot. But everyone got excited again when Dynamite Kid started displaying his high-flying maneuvers.

Eventually, the Bulldogs found themselves overpowered by the Singhs. Outside the ring, Vulkan gouged Dynamite's eye with his title belt, which was held by "Bulldog" Bob Brown. After many vicious blows, Dynamite made his way over to tag Davey Boy Smith.

Davey Boy overpowered the Singhs with his high vertical suplex and dangerous powerslam. To the delight of the fans, the Bulldogs gained the pinfall. Afterward, they challenged the Singhs to a no-disqualification match with the title on the line.

In other bouts: Johnny Smith pinned Beef Wellington ... Steve DiSalvo & Steve Blackman defeat-



Mike Rotundo chokes Road Warrior Hawk. Rotundo and the rest of The Varsity Club are feuding with the Warriors, even though both teams are rulebreakers. The Club has had success in winning the U.S. tag title, but not the Warriors' World belts.

ed Randy Colley & Roger Mason ... Larry Cameron beat Ron Ritchie ... Chris Benoit defeated Great Gama.

Cambridge, MD (Correspondent—Kevin Tobat): The main event this night saw The Road Warriors defend their NWA World tag team title against The Varsity Club. Though both teams are fierce rulebreakers, the fans quickly decided that their favorites would be the Warriors.

Animal took control of the match from the start by slamming Mike Rotundo so hard that he staggered over the ropes. When Rotundo made it back into the ring, Hawk was waiting for him with a flying shoulderdrop off the top rope.

When Rotundo managed to tag out to Steve Williams, "Dr. Death" dropkicked Animal into the ropes and hit him with an elbowdrop. Williams then went for the pin, but Animal kicked out.

After hitting Doc with a series of punches, Animal tagged out at the same time Williams did.

Rotundo slammed Hawk, causing him to fall out of the ring. Out on the arena floor, Hawk rammed Rotundo's head into the timekeeper's table. Back in the ring, Hawk tagged out to Animal, who dropkicked Rotundo several times. Outside the ring, Williams was pounding on Hawk with a chair. Doc got back in the ring and helped Rotundo double-team Animal. They threw Animal into the ropes, but Hawk grabbed Rotundo's leg. That gave Animal the chance to clothesline Williams and pin him.

In other bouts: Rick Steiner pinned Russian Assassin II ... Junkyard Dog & Michael Hayes defeated the "Original" Midnight Express ... Kevin Sullivan and Abdullah the Butcher were both disqualified ... Eddie Gilbert pinned Barry Windham ... Butch Reed pinned Steve Casey. □

YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 18)

he is an NWA champion, is he not? Of course you will see more of Tenryu as he defends his belt! What fools these fans can be!"

Q: "My question is for Wahoo McDaniel: When are you going to end your blood feud with Manny Fernandez? You should be concentrating on winning the AWA World title from Larry Zbyszko instead."—Al Byrne, Minneapolis

A: "I appreciate your nice comments, Al," said McDaniel, "but this feud with Fernandez means more to me than anything else in wrestling. He insulted me and all my ancestors by ripping apart the sacred Indian headdress that's been in my family for generations. Then, he tried to kill me during the strap match we had at SuperClash III. I agree that the World title would be a great accomplishment, but right now I'm committed to getting Fernandez out of wrestling once and for all. I won't be happy until the day it happens."

Q: "My question is for Dusty Rhodes: How long do you think it will be before your son, Dustin, becomes a world champion?"—Greg Lanuister, Clinton, MD

A: "Whoa, hold on now, Greg baby," warned Rhodes. "Dustin is just gettin' started in this business, even if I am pleased as punch about the way my son's career has progressed. He was undefeated in the FCW, and then he did really well in the NWA, too. Now, Dustin's back in Florida wrestlin' alongside his daddy. But you gotta remember that he's still only 19 years old. I don't want to rush him into too much too soon, even though he's got the raw ability to do great things. I mean, look at what happened to Mike Tyson. He won the heavyweight boxing title at 20, but his life's been a total mess ever since. I won't let that happen to



Dustin Rhodes armbars The Green Machine. Dustin's father, Dusty Rhodes, is proud of his son's career thus far.

my boy. In that light, I think it's much too early to even think about a world title for Dustin. He's the second comin' of the 'American Dream,' daddy, but he's still gotta get s'more seasonin', if you will."

Q: "My question is for Michael Hayes: Do you plan on leaving wrestling to pursue your music career full-time? Personally, I'd love to see your gorgeous face and body on the cover of *Rolling Stone*!"—Caroline Gill, Anchorage, AK

A: "You and a whole bunch of my female fans, Caroline," laughed Hayes. "But I don't think that's ever really gonna happen. I was real happy with my now-classic *Off The Streets* album, especially the two hit singles off it, *When The Love Comes Down* and, of course, *Badstreet USA*. But, if you remember, I tried to take some time off last spring to start a concert tour, but the ring kept callin' me back. Instead of touring Texas with my Badstreet Band, I got caught up in the Freebird-Von Erich feud in World Class. Now I'm in the NWA, and my career looks brighter than ever before. Hey, I'll never give up music—it's my second love—but right now I'd be more satisfied if me and ol' Junkyard Dog beat Steve Williams and Kevin Sullivan for those U.S. tag team belts. Then I'll really feel like singin'!" ☐

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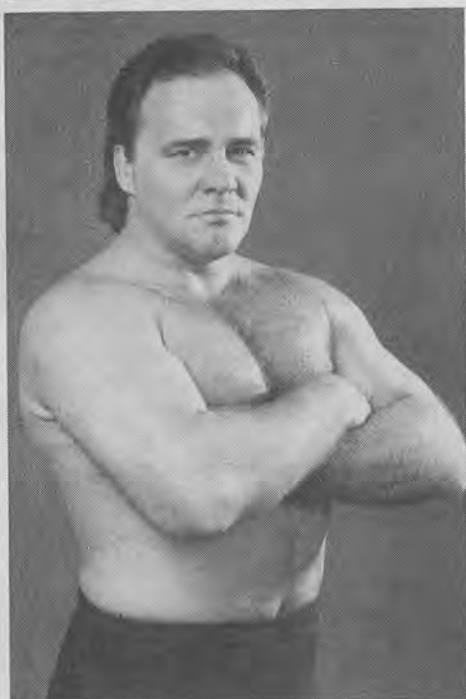
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- 6 THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
280, Queens, NY
WWF Intercontinental champion
- 7 BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
No. 1 contender: U.S. title
- 8 STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
No. 3 contender: NWA title
- 9 JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
World Class champion
- 10 LARRY ZBYSZKO**
248, Pittsburgh, PA
AWA World champion

TAG TEAMS

- 1 THE ROAD WARRIORS**
Combined weight: 567 pounds
NWA World tag team champions
- 2 DEMOLITION**
Combined weight: 585 pounds
WWF World tag team champions
- 3 WARLORD & BARBARIAN**
Combined weight: 655 pounds
No. 1 contenders: WWF tag team title
- 4 STAN LANE & BOBBY EATON**
Combined weight: 462 pounds
No. 2 contenders: NWA tag team title
- 5 PAT TANAKA & PAUL DIAMOND**
Combined weight: 456 pounds
AWA World tag team champions
- 6 ROBERT FULLER & JIMMY GOLDEN**
Combined weight: 473 pounds
CWA & WCCW tag team champions
- 7 RICK STEINER & EDDIE GILBERT**
Combined weight: 470 pounds
U.S. tag team champions
- 8 THE SAMOAN SWAT TEAM**
Combined weight: 510 pounds
No. 3 contenders: NWA tag team title
- 9 TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON**
Combined weight: 484 pounds
No. 2 contenders: WWF tag team title
- 10 KEVIN & KERRY VON ERICH**
Combined weight: 495 pounds
World Class tag team champions

NWA

World Champion:
RICK STEAMBOAT

238, Honolulu, HI

- 1—LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
- 2—RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
- 3—BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
- 4—STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
- 5—MIKE ROTUNDO**
245, Syracuse, NY
- 6—RICK STEINER**
248, Detroit, MI
- 7—JUNKYARD DOG**
305, Charlotte, NC
- 8—BUTCH REED**
265, Kansas City, MO
- 9—EDDIE GILBERT**
222, Lexington, TN
- 10—MICHAEL HAYES**
255, Marietta, GA

WWF

World Champion:
RANDY SAVAGE

245, Sarasota, FL

- 1—THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
280, Queens, NY
- 2—HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
- 3—BIG BOSSMAN**
348, Cobb County, GA
- 4—BAD NEWS BROWN**
280, New York, NY
- 5—TED DIBIASE**
247, Omaha, NB
- 6—AKEEM**
468, Chicago, IL
- 7—ANDRE THE GIANT**
497, Grenoble, France
- 8—HACKSAW DUGGAN**
280, Glens Falls, NY
- 9—CURT HENNIG**
235, Minneapolis, MN
- 10—RICK RUDE**
246, Robbinsdale, MN

AWA

World Champion:
LARRY ZBYSZKO

248, Pittsburgh, PA

- 1—GREG GAGNE**
220, Robbinsdale, MN
- 2—SGT. SLAUGHTER**
310, Parris Island, SC
- 3—TOM ZENK**
237, Minneapolis, MN
- 4—MANNY FERNANDEZ**
245, El Paso, TX
- 5—WAHOO McDANIEL**
280, Midland, TX
- 6—KEN PATERA**
256, Portland, Or
- 7—COL. DeBEERS**
248, Cape Town, South Africa
- 8—DERRICK DUKES**
232, Boston, MA
- 9—MANDO GUERRERO**
234, Tokyo, Japan
- 10—SHANE DOUGLAS**
265, St. Joseph, MO

WORLD CLASS

World Class Champion:
JERRY LAWLER

234, Memphis, TN

- 1—BRICKHOUSE BROWN**
225, Winter Haven, FL
- 2—KERRY VON ERICH**
260, Denton, TX
- 3—ERIC EMBRY**
225, Lexington, KY
- 4—JEFF JARRETT**
200, Hendersonville, TN
- 5—KEVIN VON ERICH**
235, Denton, TX
- 6—CACTUS JACK**
242, Truth or Consequences, NM
- 7—JIMMY JACK FUNK**
243, Portland, OR
- 8—SUPER BLACK NINJA**
245, Tokyo, Japan
- 9—GARY YOUNG**
240, Houston, TX
- 10—CHRIS ADAMS**
228, Straford, England

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings.

MOST POPULAR

- 1 HULK HOGAN**
302, Venice Beach, CA
Last month: No. 1 Most Popular
- 2 RICK STEAMBOAT**
238, Honolulu, HI
Last month: No. 7 Most Popular
- 3 THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
280, Queens, NY
Last month: No. 4 Most Popular
- 4 STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
Last month: No. 3 Most Popular
- 5 LEX LUGER**
268, Chicago, IL
Last month: No. 6 Most Popular
- 6 RICK STEINER**
248, Detroit, MI
Last month: No. 5 Most Popular
- 7 JAKE ROBERTS**
246, Stone Mountain, GA
Last month: unrated
- 8 MICHAEL HAYES**
255, Marietta, GA
Last month: unrated
- 9 JEFF JARRETT**
200, Hendersonville, TN
Last month: unrated
- 10 DUSTY RHODES**
302, Austin, TX
Last month: No. 9 Most Popular

MOST HATED

- 1 RANDY SAVAGE**
245, Sarasota, FL
Last month: No. 2 Most Popular
- 2 RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
Last month: No. 2 Most Hated
- 3 BIG BOSSMAN**
348, Cobb County, GA
Last month: No. 1 Most Hated
- 4 BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
Last month: No. 3 Most Hated
- 5 AKEEM**
468, Chicago, IL
Last month: No. 4 Most Hated
- 6 ANDRE THE GIANT**
497, Grenoble, France
Last month: No. 5 Most Hated
- 7 MIKE ROTUNDO**
245, Syracuse, NY
Last month: No. 6 Most Hated
- 8 RICK RUDE**
246, Robbinsdale, MN
Last month: unrated
- 9 LARRY ZBYSZKO**
248, Pittsburgh, PA
Last month: unrated
- 10 KEVIN SULLIVAN**
252, Boston, MA
Last month: unrated

For period ended March 3, 1989

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of those issues—in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only—and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a number-one rating, nine for a number-two ranking, and so on down to one point for a number-10 rating. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, allowing a maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

- 1—RANDY SAVAGE** 98 points
- 2—RIC FLAIR** 90 points
- 3—JERRY LAWLER** 75 points
- 4—LEX LUGER** 60 points
- 5—STING/BARRY WINDHAM** 40 points

TAG TEAMS

- 1—THE ROAD WARRIORS** 90 points
- 2—DEMOLITION** 88 points
- 3—STAN LANE & BOBBY EATON** 74 points
- 4—PAT TANAKA & PAUL DIAMOND** 59 points
- 5—WARLORD & BARBARIAN** 49 points

STAMPEDE

North American Champion:
TITLE VACANT

(See "Ratings Analysis")

- 1—CHRIS BENOIT**
218, Edmonton, Alberta
- 2—LARRY CAMERON**
280, Chicago
- 3—JOHNNY SMITH**
235, Manchester, England
- 4—DON MURACO**
274, Sunset Beach, HI
- 5—DYNAMITE KID**
228, Manchester, England
- 6—MAKHAN SINGH**
380, Saginaw, MI
- 7—DAVEY BOY SMITH**
245, Leeds, England
- 8—BRIAN PILLMAN**
226, Cincinnati, OH
- 9—GAMA SINGH**
220, Karachi, Pakistan
- 10—BRUCE HART**
211, Calgary, Alberta

CWA

CWA Champion:
DUTCH MANTEL

224, Oil Trough, TX

- 1—JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
- 2—JEFF JARRETT**
200, Hendersonville, TN
- 3—RICK MORTON**
228, Memphis, TN
- 4—BILL DUNDEE**
214, Melbourne, Australia
- 5—JIMMY VALIANT**
251, New York, NY
- 6—BUDDY LANDELL**
236, Los Angeles, CA
- 7—FRANK LANCASTER**
239, Atlanta, GA
- 8—KEN WAYNE**
208, Memphis, TN
- 9—PHIL HICKERSON**
208, Memphis, TN
- 10—PERRY JACKSON**
280, Fort Bragg, NC

CONTINENTAL

Continental Champion:
TOM PRICHARD

220, Houston, TX

- 1—DAN DAVIS**
238, Nashville, TN
- 2—MOONDOG SPOT**
303, parts unknown
- 3—TERRY GORDY**
289, Chattanooga, TN
- 4—BILL DUNDEE**
214, Melbourne, AUS
- 5—KOKINA**
340, Samoa
- 6—TONY ANTHONY**
235, Bucksnorth, TN
- 7—DOUG FURNAS**
265, Commerce, OK
- 8—WILLIE B. HERT**
238, El Paso, TX
- 9—RON FULLER**
235, Dyresburg, TN
- 10—BRAD ANDERSON**
225, Charlotte, NC

ICW

ICW Champion:
TONY ATLAS

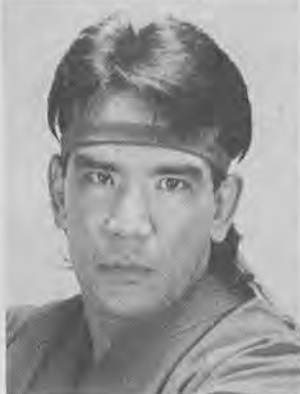
247, Roanoke, VA

- 1—IVAN PUTSKI**
242, Krakow, Poland
- 2—DON MURACO**
274, Sunset Beach, HI
- 3—JOE SAVOLDI**
220, Parsippany, NJ
- 4—VIC STEAMBOAT**
235, Honolulu, HI
- 5—LANCE VON ERICH**
260, Arlington, TX
- 6—SCOTT PUTSKI**
230, Austin, TX
- 7—TOM BRANDI**
231, Philadelphia, PA
- 8—TOMMY RICH**
248, Hendersonville, TN
- 9—JERRY BLACKWELL**
474, Stone Mountain, GA
- 10—JIMMY SNUKA**
250, Fiji Islands

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating more than 135 wrestlers in 12 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Title vacant! Due to his failure to defend the Stampede North American title once in the required 30-day period, **Don Muraco** has been stripped of the belt. A tournament will be held shortly in Calgary to determine a new champion and Muraco is entered, along with seven-time former NWA World champ **Harley Race**. Muraco had won the title from **Makhan Singh** on December 9.



Rick Steamboat

Tracking Trends. A host of title changes in the NWA meant big changes in our Top 10 and NWA ratings this month.

New NWA World champion **Rick Steamboat** moves in at number two in the Top 10 off his victory over **Ric Flair** at the Chi-Town Rumble on February 20 ... **Lex Luger** won the U.S. title from **Barry Windham** and jumps three spots to number five in the Top 10 and up to number one in the NWA ... **Mike Rotundo** regained the TV title from **Rick Steiner** to move up three notches in the NWA ratings to number five ... **Flair**, meanwhile, drops one notch to number three in the Top 10, **Windham** drops two spots to number seven, and **Steiner** falls from five to six in the NWA ... The other big NWA move concerns **Eddie Gilbert**, who is no longer considered a contender for the World title; he drops five spots to number nine.

World Class champ **Jerry Lawler** took the biggest drop in the Top 10, down six spots to number eight. This marks the first time in the past 10 months that Lawler has been below number three ... **The Ultimate Warrior**, meanwhile, continues to climb in the Top 10; the WWF Intercontinental champion, quickly gaining respect, moves up one spot to number five ... **Larry Zbyszko** won the AWA World championship and enters the Top 10 at number 10.

Steiner and **Gilbert** won the U.S. tag belts from **Kevin Sullivan** and **Steve Williams** on February 28, so they move all the way up to number seven in the tag ratings. **Sullivan** and **Williams** drop out from number six ... **The Road Warriors** are number one for the fourth straight month ... **Dennis Condrey** and **Randy Rose** are no longer a tag team, so they're out ... **Robert Fuller** and **Jimmy Golden** won the World Class

tag belts to go along with their CWA championship; they move up two notches to number seven.

As is usually the case in the WWF before *WrestleMania*, there's little movement. **Hulk Hogan** is now the top contender to the World title, so he's up a spot to number two (behind automatic number-one contender, I-C champ **Ultimate Warrior**). **Ted DiBiase**, however, has shot back into the national spotlight with his claim to be champion and is all the way up to number five.

Kerry Von Erich is no longer a contender for the AWA World title since **Lawler** is no longer champion. New champ **Zbyszko** has yet to say whether he'll defend his title in other federations ... **Don Muraco** was number three in the AWA last month when he was slated to compete in the World title battle royal. He didn't, and now he's back contending for the vacant Stampede belt ... **Ken Patera** has arrived in the area and figures to make a run at **Zbyszko**; he's number six ... **Derrick Dukes** is seeing singles action and moves in at number eight.

Brickhouse Brown finally won the World Class Texas title from **Iceman Parsons** and moves up seven spots to number one; **Parsons** has left the area ... **Dynamite Kid** and **Davey Boy Smith**, a.k.a. **The British Bulldogs**, are also wrestling individually in Stampede ... **Brian Pillman** and **Bruce Hart**, a.k.a. **Bad Company**, are also in singles competition ... **Moondog Spot** nearly beat **Tom Prichard** for the Continental title and is moved up a spot to number two ... Also in Continental, **Bill Dundee** is the top contender to **Dan Davis'** junior heavyweight title and moves in at number four.

Encore! Encore! For the second time, the ICW takes center stage in our revolving ratings category. International Championship Wrestling runs cards throughout the country, including Canada, most of New England, New Jersey, New York, Arizona, and Florida. The champion is **Tony Atlas**, and he's receiving serious competition, including a challenge from **Ivan Putski**. Several other top wrestlers have invaded the area, including **Don Muraco**, **Tommy Rich**, **Jerry "Crusher" Blackwell**, and **Jimmy Snuka**.

Farewell for now! But we'll be back next month with more *Tracking Trends*, another revolving ratings category, and other surprises. Meanwhile, we'd like to hear what's on your mind. Send your comments to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o *The Wrestler*; Box 48; Rockville Centre, NY 11571. □



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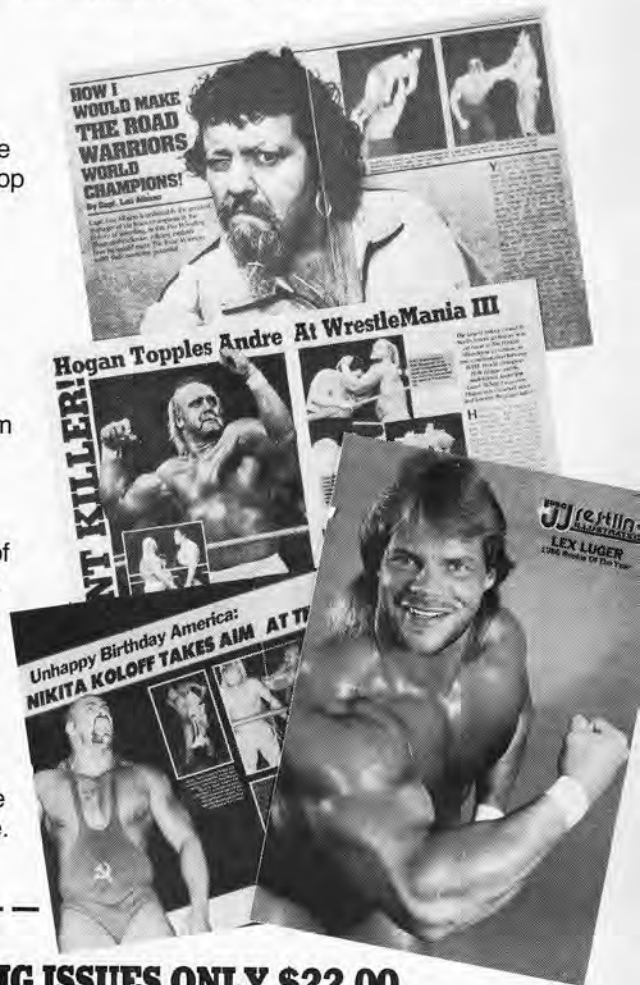
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